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A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

**THE WORKS**  
**OF**  
**SHAKESPEARE**

**A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM**

**EDITED BY**

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## INTRODUCTION

THE characteristic features of this edition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* are, first, an attempt to produce a text in advance of anything which has hitherto been published; and, secondly, an attempt to elucidate some of the long-standing difficulties connected with the interpretation of well-known passages in the play. Such, *e.g.*, are (*a*) the corrections of "*fair spirit*," II. i. 1; of "*room good fairy*," II. i. 58; of "*lack-love kill-courtesy*," II. ii. 76; of "*No, No, he'll . . .*," III. ii. 257; "*poor simple duty*," v. i. 91; of "*lily mows*," v. i. 328: (*b*) the elucidations of "*hold or cut bow-strings*," I. ii. 112; "*the human mortals want their winter cheer*," II. i. 101; the source of the well-known "*fearful wild-fowl*," III. i. 33; the attempted elucidation of "*wondrous strange snow*," v. i. 59; and the true meaning of "*late deceased*" in v. i. 53. It remains to be seen how far the judgement and knowledge of the editor fall short of attaining that ideal standard of textual criticism which every editor of Shakespeare worthy of the name ought always to keep in mind; a standard which is only to be attained, to quote the words of Dr. H. H. Furness (*New Variorum* ed., Preface, xxi), by the exercise of that "exquisite nicety demanded at the present day in emending Shakespeare's text,—a nicety of judgment, a nicety of

knowledge of Elizabethan literature, a nicety of ear, which alone bars all foreigners from the task, and, beyond all, a thorough mastery of Shakespeare's style and ways of thinking, which alone should bar all the rest of us." It can only be attained by the exercise, as Mr. Churton Collins puts it, in his essay on "The Person of Shakespearean Criticism" (*Essays and Studies*, 1895, p. 281), "of that fine and rare faculty, if it be not rather an exquisite temper and harmony of various faculties, which seems to admit a critic for a moment into the very sanctuary of genius. In less figurative language, it is the faculty of divining and recovering, as by the power of some subtle sympathy, the lost touch—the touch of magic, often in the expression of poetry so precarious and delicate, that, dependent on a single word, a stroke of the pen may efface, just as a stroke of the pen may restore it." If the standard cannot be attained, it can at least be kept in sight. But the critic of this latter day does not keep the ideal in sight. He is usually satisfied to print the old corruptions, and to adopt the despairing position of Dr. Furness when he says (Preface, p. xxii), "Moreover, by this time the text of Shakespeare has become so fixed and settled that I think it safe to predict that unless a veritable MS. of Shakespeare's own be discovered, not a single future emendation will be generally accepted in critical editions. Indeed, I think, even a wider range may be assumed, so as to include in this list all emendations, that is, substitutions of words, which have been proposed since the days of Collier. . . . There is the text, and we must comprehend it if we can."

Now the text of Shakespeare is by no means "fixed and settled." Far from it. Even in *A Midsummer-Night's*

*Dream*, the text of which has reached us in a state of comparative correctness and purity, there are passages which are admittedly corrupt, but which have hitherto defied the efforts of all the critics and commentators to fix and settle. The true course for an editor to adopt in the matter of textual criticism, is neither the despairing attitude of rigid conservatism, nor yet the "wild and whirling freedom of exsufflicate and blown surmises," but rather that sober boldness and spirit of inquiry commingled of blood and judgement, the result, so far as he can attain it, of that nicety of knowledge and judgement of which Dr. Furness speaks. To make his text and textual notes of any permanent value, he must at least stamp them with his own individuality. He must, in the words of the admonition beheld by Spenser's Britomart on the "yron dores" in the castle of Busyrane (*Faerie Queene*, III. c. xi. st. 54):

*Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold;*

. . . . .  
*Be not too bold.*

He must have no timidity in rejecting questionable readings. But,—and there is every virtue in this "but,"—there must be no restless ingenuity or imperfect knowledge. He must be neither over-bold nor over-cautious; and, above all, he must remember that nothing is to be gained by perpetuating error. And this is exactly what he continues to do. Now, in this respect, we have, once and for all, the old texts with us. They are our κτήματα ἐς αἰεί. Nothing short of a world's cataclysm can deprive us of them. But nothing is more certain than that we have *not* got the text of ~~the~~ plays as they left their author's hand. I

cordially agree with Dyce in his remarks in the Preface to his second edition, 1866, speaking of the difference between legitimate emendation and extravagant alteration: "In short, I now believe that an exact reprint of the old text with its multifarious errors forms a more valuable contribution to literature than a semi-corrected text, which, purged here and there of the grossest blunders, continues still, almost in every page, to offend against sense and metre. If the most eminent classical scholars, in editing the dramas of antiquity, have not scrupled frequently to employ conjecture for the restoration of the text, I cannot understand why an editor of Shakespeare—whose plays have come down to us no less disfigured by corruption than the masterpieces of the Athenian stage—should hesitate to adopt the happiest of the emendations proposed from time to time during more than a century and a half" [Dyce would now say "during nearly two centuries"] "by men of great sagacity and learning,—always assuming that the deviations from the early editions are duly recorded." The true function, therefore, of the well-equipped editor—"all-furnish'd, all in arms"—is, not to perpetuate error by reprinting admitted corruptions, but to strive with all his might after the attainment of a perfect text, and only to leave it, according to the measure of his abilities, in such a state as he conceives it might have left the great master's hand. The text is, after all, the *unum necessarium*, the one thing needful, "the weightier matter of the law": so far indeed is it from being "the mint, anise, and cumin of pedantic criticism," as a recent editor puts it. (See Mr. Bellyse Baildon's Introduction to *Titus Andronicus*, Arden edition, p. x.)

The text of this play has reached us in a state more perfect than perhaps that of any other play of Shakespeare. This may be due to its having been printed, in all probability, either from the authentic MS. of Shakespeare himself, or at least from an accurate copy, or, perhaps, copies of the actors' parts, transcribed in the theatre from the original MS. At any rate we are primarily concerned with three important originals—if they may be so styled—namely, the two Quartos, both printed in 1600, in Shakespeare's own lifetime, and the First Folio, printed in 1623, seven years after his death. Strictly speaking, there is only one "original," the First Quarto. The First Quarto (Q 1), sometimes called "Fisher's Quarto," was the initial trade venture of a young stationer called Thomas Fisher, and was issued under a licence to print granted by the Master Wardens of the Stationers' Company in October 1600, such licence being the nearest approach in later Elizabethan times to the system of modern copyright. In Arber's *Transcript of the Stationers' Register*, vol. iii. p. 174, the licence runs as follows:—

### 8 Octobris

THOMAS FFYSSHER. Entred for his copie vnder  
the handes of Master  
RODES | and the Wardens  
A booke called *A myd-  
sommer nightes Dreame* . . vj<sup>d</sup>

The title-page of Q 1 runs as follows:—"A | Midfommer  
nights | dreame. | As it hath beene fundry times pub- |  
*lickely acted, by the Right honoura- | ble, the Lord*

Chamberlaine his | seruants. | *Written by William Shakespeare.* [Then follows the device of a king-fisher, with the motto, *Motos foleo componere fluctus.*] ¶ Imprinted at London, for *Thomas Fisher*, and are to | be foulded at his shoppe, at the Signe of the White Hart, | in *Fleetastreete*. 1600."

The text of the other Quarto (Q 2), sometimes called "Roberts's Quarto," seems to have been founded on that of Fisher, and was apparently unauthorised, as no entry of any licence to print it has been found in the Registers. Its title-page is identical with that of Q 1, save that it bears a heraldic device, with the motto, *Post Tenebras Lux*, and it is "*Printed by Iames Roberts, 1600.*"

It is tolerably certain that Fisher's "authorised" Quarto takes priority in point of time, notwithstanding that some eminent critics are inclined to think otherwise. Halliwell, for instance, is apparently of this opinion, on the ground of the superior correctness of Fisher's Quarto, his inference being that it was printed from a corrected copy of Q 2; and Fleay likewise, for the somewhat surprising reason that printers' errors are far more likely to have been introduced than corrected in a second edition. Broadly speaking, Q 1 must always be regarded as our authentic and original text.

Knight well remarks (*Introduction*, p. 331, *circ.* 1840): "One thing is perfectly clear to us—that the original of these editions, whichever it might be, was printed from a genuine copy and carefully superintended through the press. The text appears to us as perfect as it is possible to be, considering the state of typography in that day. There is one remarkable evidence of this. The prologue to

the interlude of the Clowns is purposely made inaccurate in its punctuation throughout.....It was impossible to have effected the object better than by the punctuation of Roberts's edition ; and this is precisely one of those matters of nicety in which a printer would have failed, unless he had followed an extremely clear copy or his proofs had been corrected by an author or an editor."

There are certain distinguishing features and also points of resemblance characteristic of these three texts. In Q 1 the entrances of the characters are indicated, but the exits are often omitted ; the text is superior, and likewise the punctuation ; but the spelling is archaic, possibly as the result of having been set up by the ear from dictation ; and the typography is much inferior to that of Q 2, the founts of type having been mixed, and the type old and battered. In Q 2 the exits are far more carefully marked, and it is superior generally in stage-directions ; whilst the punctuation is inferior, though the type is comparatively clear. Q 2 corrects some of the mistakes in Q 1 ; but, on the other hand, it commits more than it corrects. Q 2 has the larger page, but both texts are, generally speaking, line for line, in both the stage-directions are in the imperative, as is customary in stage copies ; and in both there are numerous examples of spelling by the ear, as the result of the practice of the sixteenth and seventeenth century printers not composing by the eye from a written or printed copy, but by the ear from dictation. In respect of the superior stage-directions of Q 2, it may not be unlawful to conjecture that Roberts had taken a copy of Fisher's Quarto to a theatrical representation, or had otherwise procured a prompter's copy and improved the stage-directions of his edition accordingly.

The proofs are abundantly clear that the text of the Folio is simply that of a copy of Q 2, which had been in use by the prompter as a stage copy; and it is doubtful whether, in the printing of the Folio, the latter obtained more than a superficial and cursory revision. If so, how is it to be reconciled with the statement of Shakespeare's "fellowes," Heminge and Condell, in their well-known address "to the great Variety of Readers," prefixed to the First Folio, namely, that the Folio text came directly from Shakespeare's own "papers," which they had received from him with "scarse a blot"? It may be, as Furness suggests (Preface, p. xii), that Heminge and Condell (being, in all probability, well acquainted with Roberts's trade methods, and the manner in which his Quarto originated), nevertheless believed they were telling the substantial truth, inasmuch as in using the printed text of Q 2, "they were virtually using Shakespeare's MS., if they in fact knew that this text was printed directly from his MS., and had been for years used in their theatre as a stage copy, with possibly additional stage business marked on the margin for the use of the prompter, and here and there sundry emendations, noted possibly by the author's own hand, who, by these changes, theoretically authenticated all the rest of the text." However this may be, it is clear from many proofs that the text of the Folio has its direct origin in a stage copy of Q 2. Furness gives a noteworthy example in III. i. 165, where Titania calls for Pease-blossom! Cobweb! Moth! (Qq, Ff) and Mustardseed! and the four little fairies enter, exclaiming in turn, "Ready," "And I," "And I," "And I." In the Folio, Titania's call is converted into a stage direction, with *Enter* before it, and the fairies as they come



in call out "Ready," without having been summoned. But in the Qq they enter in obedience to Titania's call, and the only stage-direction is, *Enter foure Fairyes*. All proper names in the Qq, Ff are printed in italics, as are also all stage-directions. Now in Q 1 the Queen's summons to her attendants is correctly printed as the concluding line of her speech, and in italics, thus: "*Pease-blossome, Cobweb, Moth and Mustard-seede?*" In Q 2 the line is also printed as concluding Titania's speech, but the compositor overlooked both the "and" in Roman type, which he changed to italic, and the note of interrogation at the end, which he changed to a full stop, thus converting it into a genuine stage-direction; and as such it was undoubtedly copied by the compositor of the Folio, who prefixed *Enter*, and changed *Enter foure fairies* into *and foure Fairies*, thereby making the number of fairies eight in all.

Another kind of variation between the stage copy of Q 2 and the Folio is apparent in the first scene of the play, where Theseus bids Philostrate, his Master of the Revels, "Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments" (line 12). Philostrate retires, and at once Egeus enters. Except in the last scene, these two characters are never on the stage together; so that down to the last scene one actor would "double" the parts. In the last scene one must be omitted; this is Philostrate, as the least important. In an *acting* text the prefixes to the speeches must therefore be changed, and in this last scene the prefix *Egeus* must be substituted for Philostrate. No doubt this took place in the acting copy of Q 2; but in v. i. 76, the Folio has retained *Phi*. Instead of changing it into *Egeus*, as in the remainder of the scene. In v. i. 127, the Folio has the

stage-direction "*Tawyer with a Trumpet before them*" before the entrance of Pyramus and the others. Tawyer was the name of one of the company, or at any rate a subordinate in the pay of Heminge. (See Halliwell, *Outlines of Shakespeare's Life*, p. 500.) In III. i. 116, the Folio has the stage-direction "*Enter Piramus with the Asse head*"—significant of the prompter's knowledge of only one ass's head being amongst the theatrical properties.

Further, there is one line in the Qq which is entirely omitted in the Folio, namely, III. ii. 344, *Her*. "I am amazed and know not what to say." *Exeunt*. *Exeunt* is also omitted in the Folio, but it is essential as a stage-direction; hence the conclusion is inevitable that as the line appears in the Qq its omission in the Folio is a mere compositor's blunder.

Lastly, it may be noted that in v. i. 321 the stage-direction in the Folio is "*Enter Thisbe*," and that this direction is printed before the speech of Theseus; thereby indicating that the actor was to be ready before he has to make his actual appearance on the stage; and showing indubitably that the Folio must have been printed from a stage copy.

The First Folio text was reproduced, more or less correctly, in the Second Folio of 1632 (F 2), the Third Folio of 1664 (F 3), and the Fourth Folio of 1685 (F 4).

The title of this play has given rise to a considerable amount of comment and conjecture. "I know not," says Dr. Johnson, "why Shakespeare calls the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when he so carefully informs us that it happened on the night preceding *May day*."

Farmer remarks, "The title of this play seems no more intended to denote the precise *time of the action* than that of *The Winter's Tale*, which we find was at the season of sheep-shearing." "In *Twelfth Night*," says Steevens, "Olivia observes of Malvolio's seeming frenzy that it is a very *Midsummer* madness. That time of the year we may therefore suppose was anciently thought productive of mental vagaries resembling the scheme of Shakespeare's play. To this circumstance it might have owed its title." Malone thought, no doubt wrongly, that the title was suggested by the time when it was first introduced on the stage. "To the inheritors of the English tongue," says Furness (Preface, p. v), "the potent sway of fairies on Midsummer eve is familiar. The very title is in itself a charm, and frames our minds to accept without question any delusion of the night, and this it is which shields it from criticism." And he further remarks (Preface, p. viii), "The discrepancy noted by Dr. Johnson can be, I think, explained by recalling the distinction, always in the main preserved in England, between festivities and rites attending the May, day celebrations and those of the twenty-fourth of June: the former were allotted to the day-time and the latter to the night-time. As the wedding sports of Theseus, with hounds and horns and interludes, were to take place by daylight, May day was the fit time for them; as the cross purposes of the lovers were to be made straight with fairy charms during slumber, night was chosen for them, and both day and night were woven together, and one potent glamour floated over all in the shadowy realm of a midsummer night's dream." In effect, therefore, Shakespeare's title meant no more than a dream which might be

dreamt, or the shadowy events of which might pass, in any night in the height of summer—"the middle summer" (II. i. 82). This, I think, is satisfactory enough for English readers who are not enslaved to the idea that Shakespeare's ways of thinking are other than Shakespeare's ways, and who will gladly leave to the Germans their *Sommer Nacht's Traum* and all the mass of irrelevant discussion thereon. The English reader will continue to rejoice in his English poet. "Robin Goodfellow" is enough for him. He will leave to the Germans their very German "Ruprecht" and vulgar "Walpurgisnacht's Traum"; and he will decline to look at Shakespeare through the medium, as Furness would put it, of fantastic German distortions.

Nor need the duration of the action of the play cause us any real concern. No doubt Shakespeare is emphatic enough in his opening as to the *four* happy days which will bring in another moon, and the *four* nights which will quickly *dream* away the time: and whether he forgot his initial outline and only assigned *one* night to the four days, or leaves us to imagine them, or dream them, or intimates them to us by "swift fleeting allusions which induce the belief almost insensibly that a new dawn has arisen," seems to me a matter of the smallest consequence. It is a matter for the practical dramatist, who knows the wants of the stage. We know that such dramatic workmanship is a feature of many of Shakespeare's plays; e.g. in the *Merchant of Venice* three hours are the equivalent of three months, and in *Othello* many days are compressed into something like a day and a half. Such compression is a vital dramatic necessity. As Furness aptly remarks (Preface, p. xxxii), "There are allusions in the second Act, undeniably,

to the near approach of a dawn, and again there are allusions in the third Act, undeniably, to the near approach of a dawn; wherefore, since divisions into acts indicate progress in the action, or they are meaningless, I think we are justified in considering these allusions, in different acts, as referring to two separate dawns; that of Wednesday and that of Thursday, the only ones we need before the May-day horns are heard on Friday." In a word, the cardinal fact to be remembered in this respect is, that Shakespeare wrote for his audience and not for the reader in the closet—for the imaginative spectator, and not for the coldly-comprehensive critic or scholar. In fact, the whole truth of the matter is concisely stated by Professor Hall Griffin, quoted by Professor Dowden in the Introduction (p. xxii) to his edition of *Hamlet* in the Arden Shakespeare: "Shakespeare is at fault; he did not trouble himself to reconcile . . . inconsistencies which practical experience as an actor would tell him do not trouble the spectator." Or, as Dowden himself still more concisely states it in the Introduction (p. xxxi) to his edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, "the dramatist knew that spectators in the theatre do not regulate their imagination by a chronometer." Mr. P. A. Daniel's note on the duration of the action, taken from the *Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1877-79, Part ii. p. 147, will be found in the Appendix, and may be found useful by or interesting to the curious student.

The primary, if not indeed the one positive piece of external evidence in connection with the date of composition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is the well-known reference by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wit's*

*Treasury* (p. 282), registered in September 1598. "It runs:—"As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for *Comedy* and *Tragedy* among the *Latines*, so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for *Comedy*, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labors lost*, his *Love Labors wonne*, his *Midsummers Night Dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for *Tragedy*, his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*." That is the external evidence, implying as it does the existence of the play in 1598; and it is simply a matter of conjecture how long Meres may have composed his book before it was registered, and how long before the book's composition the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* had been written and acted. It is noteworthy, however, that the play stands fifth in Meres's list of comedies; and this fact affords, I think, some slight indication of Meres's belief, knowledge, or recollection that it was not amongst the very earliest of Shakespeare's plays. It is also noteworthy that it stands eighth in the list of comedies as printed in the First Folio.

Let us see, then, how far the internal evidence of the play itself enables us to form an opinion as to the date of composition. There are certain lines and allusions which furnish clues more or less satisfactory; and the most important of these will now be considered; the general conclusions to be drawn from them being to justify the belief that the play was composed in the autumn of 1594-95, and was in all probability acted in the succeeding month of January, if not earlier.

1. The first and most important allusion is contained in

■. i. 81-117, namely, Titania's description of the disastrous effects on the weather caused by her quarrel with Oberon. There are several contemporary descriptions of an excessively wet and cold summer occurring in the year 1594. Evidence of this kind cannot, of course, be regarded as conclusive; but I think it certainly comes within the region of lawful conjecture; and taken in conjunction with the other points and allusions occurring in the play, I think it affords a reasonably strong presumption that the above date cannot be far wrong. Titania's description, which, in its place, is not particularly dramatic or requisite, would at any rate have special point for audiences hearing the play late in 1594 or early in 1595, and not likely to have forgotten the unseasonable weather of the previous summer; and this and the fact that the play is almost entirely concerned with out-of-door existence are, I think, presumptions in favour of the supposition that Shakespeare's thoughts were running on the "distemperature" of the previous months, and that he adopted it as useful dramatic material; and this notwithstanding that there seems to be recorded "a faire harvest" in 1594. This latter, in any event, would not strike men's minds so forcibly or *universally* as the "distemperature" of the seasons. The contemporary descriptions are as follows:—

(a) Stowe's *Annals*, 1594 (ed. 1631, pp. 766 *sqq.*): "In this moneth of March was many great stormes of winde which ouerturned trees, steeples, barnes, houses, &c., namely in Worcestershire, in Beaudley forrest many Oakes were ouerturned. . . . The 11 of Aprill, a raine continued very sore more than 24 houres long and withall, such a winde from the north, as pearced the wals of houses, were they

neuer so strong. . . . In the moneth of May, namely, on the second day, came downe great water flouds, by reason of sodaine shoures of haile and raine that had fallen, which bare downe houses yron milles. . . . This yeere in the moneth of May, fell many great shoures of raine, but in the moneths of June and July, much more; for it commonly rained euerie day, or night, till *S. Iames* day, and two daies after together most extreamly, all which, notwithstanding in the moneth of August there followed a faire haruest, but in the moneth of September fell great raines, which raised high waters, such as staid the carriages, and bare downe bridges, at Cambridge, Ware, and elsewhere, in many places. Also the price of graine grewe to be such, as a strike or bushell of Rie was sold for five shillings, a bushell of wheat for sixe, seuen, or eight shillings, &c., for still it rose in price, which dearth happened (after the common opinion) more by meanes of ouermuch transporting, by our owne merchants for their priuate gaine, than through the vnseasonableness of the weather passed."

(b) The extracts printed by Strype (*Ann.* v. iv. p. 211) from Dr. King's *Lectures upon Ionas* (preached at York in 1594, and published in 1618, and referring in the marginal note to "the yeare of the Lord 1593 and 1594"): "The moneths of the year haue not yet gone about, wherein the Lord hath bowed the heapens, and come down amongst vs with more tokens and earnestes of his wrath intended, then the agedst man of our land is able to recount of so small a time. For say, if euer the windes, since they blew one against the other, haue beene more common, and more tempestuous, as if the foure endes of heauen had conspired to turne the foundations of the earth vpside downe;



thunders and lightnings neither seasonable for the time, and withall most terrible, with such effects brought forth, that the childe vnborne shall speake of it. The anger of the clouds hath beene powred downe vpon our heads, both with abundance and (sauing to those that felt it) with incredible violence; the aire threatned our miseries with a blazing starre; the pillars of the earth tottered in many whole countries and tracts of our Ilande; the arrowes of a woeful pestilence haue beene caste abroad at large in all the quarters of our realme, euen to the emptying and dispeopling of some parts thereof."

(c) Dr. Simon Forman's observations on the year 1594 (in the Ashmolean MS. No. 384, quoted by Halliwell in his Introduction to *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, p. 6, ed. 1841): "Ther was moch sicknes but lyttle death, moch fruit and many plombs of all sorts this yeare and small nuts, but fewe walnuts. This monethes of June and July were very wet and wonderfull cold like winter, that the 10 dae of Julii many did syt by the fyer, yt was so cold; and soe was yt in Maye and June; and scarce too fair dais together all that tyme, but yt rayned every day more or lesse. Yf yt did not raine, then was yt cold and cloudye. Mani murders were done this quarter. There were many gret fludes this sommer, and about Michelmas, thorowe the abundaunce of raine that fell sodeinly; the brige of Ware was broken downe, and at Stratford Bowe, the water was never seen so byg as yt was; and in the lattere end of October, the waters burste downe the bridg at Cambridge. In Barkshire were many gret waters, wherewith was moch harm done sodenly."

(d') Thomas Churchyard's *Charitie*, 1595:

A colder time in world was neuer seene;  
The skies do lowre, the sun and moone waxe dim;  
Sommer scarce knowne but that the leaues are greene  
The winter's waste driues water ore the brim;  
Upon the land great flotes of wood may swim.  
Nature thinks scorne to do hir dutie right  
Because we haue displeasde the Lord of light.

Of course, evidence of this kind cannot be in any *sense* conclusive, but it affords, I think, a striking example of Shakespeare's skill and business ability in taking advantage, for dramatic purposes, of current or contemporary events, which must, at the time, have made a strong impression on men's minds. For somewhat similar references we may compare the "earthquake" in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iii. 23; and "these late eclipses" in *King Lear*, I. ii. 113; and Craig's note thereon.

2. Amongst the "revels" or "sports" proposed in the "brief" of Theseus's master of the revels, we have the well-known lines in v. i. 52, 53:

The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.

I think there is here a clear allusion to Spenser's *Tears of the Muses*, published in 1591, and that the allusion is skilfully adapted to refer to the death of Robert Greene, which occurred in September 1592. The idea that it refers to the death of Spenser himself, namely, in 1599, is obviously quite inadmissible. I agree with Knight in thinking that the "expressions are too precise and limited to refer to the tears of the Muses for the decay of knowledge and art." "Greene," says Knight, "a man of learning" [he was

*utriusque Academiæ in Artibus Magister*, and "For judgement Jove, for learning deepe he still Apollo seemde": Greene's *Funeralls*, 1594], "and one whom Shakespeare, in the generosity of his nature, might wish to point at kindly, died in 1592, in a condition that might truly be called beggary. But how was his death, any more than that of Spenser, to be the occasion of 'Some Satire keen and critical'?" Every student of our literary history will remember the famous controversy of Nash and Gabriel Harvey, which was begun by Harvey's publication in 1592, of *'Foure Letters and certain Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused.'* Robert Greene was dead; but Harvey came forward, in revenge of an incautious attack of the unhappy poet, 'to satirize him in his grave, to hold up his vices and misfortunes to the public scorn. . . . ' 'Truly I have been ashamed,' observed Harvey, 'to hear some ascertayned reports of hys most woefull and rascall estate: how the wretched fellow, or shall I say the Prince of *beggars*, laid all to gage for some few shillings: . . . and would pitifully *beg* a penny pott of Malmesie: and could not gett any of his old acquaintance to comfort, or visite him in his extremity but Mistris Appleby, and the mother of Infortunatus.'" Halliwell thinks "there is nothing in the consideration that the poet had been attacked by Greene as the 'upstart crow' to render Knight's theory improbable. The allusion was certainly not conceived in an unkind spirit; and the death of one who at most was rather jealous than bitterly inimical, under such afflicting circumstances, there can be no doubt would have obliterated all traces of animosity from a mind so generous as was that of Shakespeare." Halli-

well also agrees in the supposition that there is a reference to Spenser's poem. As to this, I think it is not too much to assume that Shakespeare was, since his appearance in London and the dedication of all his powers to the stage and the drama, a keen student of contemporary literature. He must have been well acquainted with Spenser's poems. It will not be forgotten that a couple of years after the publication of the *Teares of the Muses* appeared his *Venus and Adonis*, which is written in the metre of the *Teares*. The latter poem stands No. 2 in the volume of "*Complaints: containing sundrie small poemes of the world's vanitie whereof the next page maketh mention*, by Ed: Sp: imprinted for William Ponsonbie 1591." It is dedicated "to the Right Honorable the Lady Strange." The poem No. 3 in the volume is "Virgil's Gnat long since dedicated to the Most Noble and Excellent Lord the Earle of Leicester *late deceased*." The significance of the last words of this dedication will appear when it is remembered that Leicester died in 1588, the year of the Armada. If Spenser could refer to him as "late deceased" *three* years after his death, it is not a great stretch of probability to assume that Shakespeare might reasonably, at the end of 1594, use the exact words in reference to Greene's death in September 1592. That event would be still fresh in the recollection of the literary and theatrical world of London. Therefore even on this ground alone, if on no other, we may fairly say that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is to be referred to the autumn or winter of 1594-95. The significance of Spenser's dedication of the *Teares* to Lady Strange will also presently appear.

3. Judging from the frame of the play, and notably

from the opening lines and the last act, winding up as it does with Puck's "Epithalamium," it is not improbable that it was, at least eventually, intended for the celebration of the marriage of some nobleman of Elizabeth's court; but I rather incline to the belief that it was not so in the first instance; and that, marriage or no marriage, we should have had *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, though, perhaps, not exactly in its present form. "If," says Furness, "a noble marriage before 1598 can be found to which there are unmistakeable allusions in the play, we shall go far to confining the *Date of Composition* within narrow limits." Various attempts have been made to discover the marriage in question. The suggestion of Fleay is, in my opinion, by far the most probable yet made. In his *Life and Work of Shakespeare* (1886, p. 81), he says: "January 26 was the date of the marriage of William Stanley, Earl of Derby, at Greenwich. Such events were usually celebrated with the accompaniment of plays or interludes, masques written specially for the occasion not having yet become fashionable. The company of players employed at these nuptials would certainly be the Chamberlain's (*i.e.* the company to which Shakespeare belonged), who had, so lately as the year before (*i.e.* 1594) been in the employ of the Earl's brother Ferdinand. No play known to us is so fit for the purpose as *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, which in its present form is certainly of this date. About the same time Edward Russel, Earl of Bedford, married Lucy Harington. Both marriages may have been enlivened by this performance.

The date of the play here given is again confirmed by the description of the weather (in II. i. 81 *sqq.*). . . . Chute's *Cephalus and Procris* was entered on the *Stationers'*

*Registers*, 28 Sept. 1593; Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* 22nd October 1593; Marlowe and Nash's *Dido* was printed in 1594. All these stories are alluded to in the play. The date of the Court performance must be in the winter of 1594-95."

Marriage is the theme of the play. It is initiated by the coming marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, and it is wound up not only by their marriage, but by those of the pairs of lovers. If Fleay's hypothesis be correct, may not this have some slight reference to the double wedding of 1594-95?

William Stanley was the younger brother of Ferdinand, Lord Strange, and by the death of his father in September 1593, and of his brother Ferdinand in April 1594, he became sixth Earl of Derby. Next year he married Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, and Stowe, in his *Annals*, thus records the event:

"The 26 of January William Earl of Derby married the Earl of Oxford's daughter at the Court then at Greenwich, which marriage feast was there most royally kept."

It may, therefore, with some reason be conjectured, but only conjectured, that Elizabeth herself was present, and that the royal ears listened to the graceful though somewhat irrelevant tribute to the "fair vestal throned by the west" (II. i. 158). Inasmuch as the "marriage feast was most royally kept," in all likelihood one of the entertainments was *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Again, on the assumption that the play was performed at Greenwich and at William Stanley's wedding, it is not a further

stretch of probability to assume the presence of the Dowager Countess of Derby, the widow of the late Earl, who was Lady Strange at the date of the dedication to her of Spenser's poem in 1591; or, further, to assume that the reference to "the thrice three Muses" may have been intended as a compliment to her and the Stanley family. We must never forget, however, that in these matters we are forced, from the very circumstances, to deal with probabilities and not with actual facts; and it must also be noted that Shakespeare's company is not stated to have played at Court on "the 26 of January," though performances are recorded on the 5th January and 22nd February 1595. (See Fleay, *Life and Work of Shakespeare*, 1866, pp. 126, 127.)

4. Another allusion is distinctly in favour of the autumn of 1594. The reference in I. ii. 77 and III. i. 31 to the lion frightening the duchess and the ladies, is not improbably a reminiscence of an incident which happened at the Scottish Court at the baptism of Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I., in August 1594. Malone was the first to remark on "the odd coincidence," as he calls it. He quotes a pamphlet which is reprinted in Spenser's Tracts, ii. 179: "While the king and queen were at dinner a chariot was drawn in by 'a black-moore. This chariot should have been drawne in by a lyon, but because his presence might have brought some fears to the nearest, or that the sights of the lights and the torches might have commoved his tameness, it was thought meete that the Moor should supply that room.'"

Steevens, in his note to II. i. 15, refers to the following passage from the old anonymous comedy of *The Wisdom*

of *Doctor Dodypoll*, the earliest known edition of which is dated 1600 :

'Twas I that led you through the painted meads,  
When the light fairies danc'd upon the flowers,  
Hanging on every leaf an orient pearl.

It is true that Nash, in his preface to Gabriel Harvey's *Hunt is Up*, 1596, mentions the name "doctor Dodypowle," but this is without any reference to the play, and the name Dodipoll had long previously been in use for a blockhead. H. Chichester Hart points out (*Athenæum*, 1888) that the name occurs in *Hickscorner*, 1552 :

What, Master Doctor Dotypoll,  
Cannot you preach well in a black boll  
Or dispute any divinity?

It seems to be represented by the modern slang word "dotty." So that we can deduce no argument as to the date from the reference by Steevens.

The arguments of Chalmers for assigning the date of the play to the year 1598 may be found set out at length in Furness's *New Variorum*, p. 248 *sqq.* I shall not attempt to introduce them here, as, in my opinion, they have no real weight, and are weak and inconclusive. The conjectures of Gerald Massey and of some of the German critics (Tieck, Elze, Kurz, and others), which attempt to fix an earlier or later date for the play, on the theory, amongst others, that the occasion of the performance was the marriage of Lord Essex with Lady Sidney in 1590, or that of Lord Southampton with Elizabeth Vernon in 1598—both secret marriages, by the way, and obnoxious to the Queen's displeasure—may also be found duly set



out in Furness, p. 248 *sqq.* In my opinion, they may be dismissed as not worth serious discussion.

A somewhat shrewd line of argument as to the date has been adopted by Aldis Wright in his Introduction to the Clarendon Press Edition, p. xi, where he says: "If we attempt to arrange the plays which Meres attributes to Shakespeare, so as to distribute them over the period from 1589 to 1598, we shall find two gaps, in either of which we might conjecturally place the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The interval from 1589 to 1591 is filled up by *Love's Labour's Lost*, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *Titus Andronicus*. In 1593, 1594, are placed *Richard the Second*, *Richard the Third*, *King John*, and in these years appeared *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. The *Merchant of Venice* is assigned to 1596, and *Henry the Fourth* to 1597. Besides these there are the three Parts of *Henry the Sixth*, which Meres does not mention, but which, if Shakespeare's at all, must belong to the earlier part of this period, and '*Loue Labours Wonne*,' whatever this may have been. On the whole, I am disposed to agree with Professor Dowden in regarding the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as earlier than the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, while I cannot think the latter was composed after the plays assigned above to 1593, 1594, and would therefore place it in the interval from 1591 to 1593, when perhaps *Romeo and Juliet* may have been begun." I see no reason whatever to think that the historical plays above mentioned, *i.e.* those assigned to 1593, 1594, were necessarily composed *after* the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. On the contrary, I am strongly of opinion that these historical plays show clearly that Shakespeare was still more

or less—more, certainly, in *Richard the Third*—under the influence of Marlowe ; and that in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* we have the earliest, purest, and most original effort of his *own* genius, finding its own high level, and unswayed by the influence of any dramatic predecessor. It is the *dramatic* complement of the *poetic* efforts of 1593, 1594. Aldis Wright has, therefore, in my opinion, mistaken his "gap." The interval from 1594 to 1596 has, if we consider such evidence as has been previously adduced, every single argument of weight in its favour.

Further, the evidence of style and composition is unmistakeable, and goes to show that the place of the play must be amongst the early comedies, in all probability after *Love's Labour's Lost*, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Errors*. We have its blank verse of a somewhat regular and monotonous kind. We have the symmetrical grouping of the characters, characteristic of all the early plays. We have the usual strained conceits, the antitheses, and other rhetorical devices of Shakespeare's early manner, not to speak of certain artificial devices of construction, indicating immature stage-craft, such as the device in the first Act of leaving Lysander and Hermia alone on the stage to arrange their flight from Athens. The play abounds with rhyme, even when this is not necessary for lyrical expression. The characters, too, with the notable exception of Bottom, are more or less sketches, and are far indeed from being living exponents of Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature. The Cowden-Clarkes hereon well remark : "The internal evidence of the composition itself gives unmistakeable token of its having been written when the poet

was in his flush of youthful manhood. The classicality of the principal personages, Theseus and Hippolyta; the Grecian-named characters; the prevalence of rhyme; the grace and whimsicality of the fairy-folk; the rich warmth of colouring that pervades the poetic diction; the abundance of description, rather than of plot, action, and character-development, all mark the young dramatist." With regard to the date of composition, therefore, I think a fairly strong case has been made out for the autumn or winter of 1594-95; and in this date most prominent Shakespearean scholars agree: *e.g.* Malone, Knight, Collier, Dyce, Keightley, Halliwell, Marshall, Dowden, and Craig. We may be satisfied to leave it at that, until the unlikely event of some tangible piece of evidence arising which will tend to correct this assumption.

It cannot be said that Shakespeare is indebted to any single source for the plot of his *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Hints from many quarters of his reading, knowledge, and experience seem to have been taken and welded into one beautiful and harmonious poetic mass by the force of his fancy and imagination. Some hints he took from (a) Plutarch's *Lives*, and from (b) Chaucer's *Knights Tale*; something from (c) the story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in his favourite book, Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; perhaps a hint, perhaps not, from (d) Greene's *History of James IV.*; mayhap a thought or two from (e) Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; something from (f) ballad, tale, and tradition regarding the fairy beings of English superstition and folk-lore; and possibly the hint of the "love-juice" from (g) Montemayor's *Diana* (1579).

(a) The essential passages in Plutarch's *Lives* which

supplied Shakespeare with the allusions in II. i. 68-80 will be found in the notes, p. 40.

(b) *The Knightes Tale* was probably the most famous of Chaucer's works, and the subject had been already dramatised, namely, by Richard Edwards in his *Palamon and Arcyte*, 1566. A *Palamon and Arcite* had also been acted at the Rose Theatre in September 1594. (See Fleay, *Life and Work of Shakespeare*, 1886.) But these plays are not extant. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* resembles *The Knightes Tale* in little more than that the scene in both is laid at the court of Theseus. The characters are entirely different. "There is little," says Staunton, "at all in common between the two stories except the name of Theseus, the representative of which appears in Shakespeare simply as a prince who lived in times when the introduction of ethereal beings, such as Oberon, Titania, and Puck was in accordance with tradition and romance." In fact, Shakespeare, the dramatist, even at this early stage of his career, saw fit to reject as unsuitable for his play material which Chaucer, the poet, found entirely suitable for his tale. Such glimpses as Shakespeare may have obtained of Chaucer's characters or facts may be seen from the passages printed in Appendix III. His *Palamon and Arcite*, in their rivalry for the love of Emilie, may have suggested the pairs of Athenian lovers and their complicated rivalry in the play. It will not be forgotten, also, that the name of Philostrate, Theseus's "Master of the Revels," is the name Arcite assumes in Chaucer's *Tale*, when he goes to Athens after his escape.

(c) The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is "as old as the hills and a great deal older"; but I think that for Shake-

Shakespeare's special authority we need look no further than Golding's Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book IV. p. 43, ed. 1567). The story as Golding has versified it will be found in Appendix IV.; together with *A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe*, by I. Thomson, in Clement Robinson's *Hande-full of Pleasant Delites*; and no doubt Shakespeare had read this ballad as well.

(d) To Greene's *Historie of James IV.*, written about 1590, Shakespeare is certainly not indebted in any particular that I can discover, hardly even for the name of Oberon. Its full title runs: *The Scottish Historie of James IV., slaine at Flodden—Intermixed with a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oboram (sic) King of Fayeries*. This "Historie" was printed in 1598. The story of Flodden Field apparently has nothing to do with the drama, the plot of which has no historical foundation; and, so far as I can discover, the "intermixture with the pleasant Comedie" consists only of a prelude or chorus in which Oberon and the "angry Scot" Bohan introduce the body of the play, and of dances by certain "antics," "jigs devised for the nonst" or "rounds of fairies," or "some pretty dances" between the Acts.\* What all this has to do with *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* one is at a loss to discover. Professor A. W. Ward, however, thinks that "the general idea of the machinery of Oberon and his fairy court was in all probability taken by Shakspeare from Greene's Scottish History of James IV." (See his *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. p. 85, new ed.) The reader may be left to form his own opinion.

(e) Shakespeare, I think it will be agreed, took nothing from Spenser. Reference hereon may be made to the *Faerie Queene*, Book II. c. x. 631 *sqq.*

(f) "Shakespeare," says Keightley, in a well-known passage (*Fairy Mythology*, ii. 127, ed. 1833), "seems to have attempted a blending of the Elves of the village with the Fays of romance. His fairies agree with the former in their diminutive stature,—diminished, indeed, to dimensions inappreciable by village gossips,—in their fondness for dancing, their love of cleanliness and in their child-abstracting propensities. Like the Fays, they form a community, ruled over by the princely Oberon and the fair Titania. There is a court and chivalry; Oberon . . . like earthly monarchs, has his jester, 'the shrewd and knavish sprite, called Robin Goodfellow'" (ii. i. 33).

Shakespeare may have gained some hints for his character of the fairy king for the purposes of this play from the old French courtly romance of *Huon of Burdeaux*, translated by Lord Berners, *circ.* 1540, on which a play, now lost, was founded, according to the record of that "thrifty but illiterate" manager, Henslowe, in his *Diary*, where the play appears as "*hewen of burdokes*," and as having been performed in "desembr" and "Janewary" 1593. The date of this is at any rate significant, as it must have preceded the composition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Keightley (*Fairy Mythology*, ii. 6 note) shows clearly that the name is identical with that of the dwarf Elberich (*i.e.* elf-king) in Wolfram von Eschenbach's ballad of Otnit in the *Heldenbuch*. It cannot be said, however, that there is more than an indirect resemblance between the Oberon of the old courtly romance and Shakespeare's fairy king. If Shakespeare took the name he took else, save perhaps the references to Oberon's connection with the East. Mr. S. Lee, in his Introduction to

*Duke Huon of Burdeaux* (Early Eng. Text. Socy. Pub. Part I. p. 50), says: "The Oberon of the great poet's fairy-comedy, although he is set in a butterfly environment, still possesses some features very similar to those of the romantic fairy king. . . . The mediæval fairy dwells in the East; his kingdom is situated somewhere to the east of Jerusalem, in the far-reaching district that was known to mediæval writers under the generic name of India. Shakespeare's fairy is similarly a foreigner to the western world. He is totally unlike Puck, his lieutenant, 'that merry wanderer of the night' (II. i. 43), who springs from purely English superstition, and it is stated in the comedy that he has come to Greece 'from the farthest steep of India.' Titania, further, tells her husband how the mother of her page-boy gossiped at her side in their home 'in the spiced Indian air, by night' (II. i. 124). And it will be remembered that an Indian boy causes the jealousy of Oberon." And, in my opinion, one significant proof that Shakespeare had read the old romance appears from his mention of the "fearful wild-fowl." (See II. i. 232, of the griffin, and III. i. 33, of the lion, and the notes thereon.)

The name Titania can only be called the invention of Shakespeare in so far as he has applied it to the Queen of the Fairies. Its source is undoubtedly the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, which Shakespeare probably read, but more probably only referred to, in the original (see *Metamorphoses*, iii. 173, "dumque ibi perluitur solita Titania lympa"; where Titania is a name of Diana), as well as in his favourite book, the translation by Arthur Golding. "It must have struck him," says Baynes, *Shakespeare Studies* (p. 210, ed. 1894), "in reading the text of the *Metamor-*

*phoses*, as it is not to be found in the only translation which existed in his day. Golding, instead of transferring the name Titania, always translates it in the case of Diana by the phrase Titan's daughter. . . . Shakespeare could not, therefore, have been indebted to Golding for the happy selection. On the other hand, in the next translation of the *Metamorphoses* by Sandys, first published ten years after Shakespeare's death, Titania is freely used. . . . It is clear, therefore, I think, that Shakespeare not only studied the *Metamorphoses* in the original, but that he read the different stories with a quick and open eye for any name, incident, or allusion that might be available for use in his own dramatic labours." Keightley, to whom we are already indebted, thus explains the origin of the name (*Fairy Mythology*, ii. 127): "It was the belief of those days that the fairies were the same as the classic Nymphs, the attendants of Diana; 'that fourth kind of spiritus,' says King James, 'quhilk be the gentilis was called Diana, and her wandering Court, and amongs us called the *Phairie*.' The Fairy Queen was therefore the same as Diana, whom Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, iii. 173) styles Titania." But if Shakespeare gleaned the name from the *Metamorphoses*, he took little else. "His queen," says Chambers, "is a very different being from the classic Diana. She has no single characteristic of the goddess. She is an innocent, impulsive, childlike fay; she is the embodiment of feminine daintiness and delicacy; and all about her is imagined with an exquisite instinct for the elemental life of flower and insect and all the dainty and delicate things of nature."

The word Puck, as denoting "that shrewd and knavish sprite called Robin Goodfellow" (II. i. 33), is, strictly speak-



ing, an appellation and not a person, being merely an old word meaning devil; and even in the play we find him saying, "as I am *an* honest Puck," and "else *the* Puck a liar call" (v. i. 438 and 442). The name was known in England probably as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century. See the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, 11345 (ed. Wright),

Out of the *poukes* pondfold  
No maynprise may us fecche;

and the "Romance of Richard Cœur de Lion," 4236 (in Weber's *Metrical Romances*, vol. ii., "He is no man, he is a pouke"; both extracts quoted in Wright's Introduction to the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Clar. Press ed., p. xvi). The Icelandic *puki*, the Devonshire *pixy*, the Worcestershire *poake* (*poake-ledden*), the Dutch *spook*, are all variations of the same word.

Keightley apparently was of opinion that Shakespeare was the first to confound Puck with the English house-spirit, Robin Goodfellow; "but it is evident," says Knight, "that in popular belief the same mischief-loving qualities which belong to Puck were attributed to Robin Goodfellow long before the time of Shakespeare." In my opinion it is nearer the mark to say, not that he was the first to confound the two, but that he was the first to crystallise the floating popular belief, and to stamp it on English poetry for all time.

Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, first published in 1584, ought, perhaps, apart from popular tradition at least, to be considered as Shakespeare's chief source of information as to Robin Goodfellow's qualities. Scot, speaking of the birth of Merlin, says (4 Booke, c. x. p. 67, ed. Nicholson): "I hope you understand that they

affirme and saie, that *Incubus* is a spirit; and I trust you know that a spirit hath no flesh nor bones, &c.; and that he neither dooth eate nor drinke. In deede your grandames maides were woont to set a boll of milke before him and his cousine Robin good-fellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight; and you haue also heard that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or good-wife of the house, hauing compassion of his nakedness, laid anie clothes for him, be sides his messe of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith: 'What haue we here? Hemton hamten, here will I neuer more tread nor stampen.'" Again, Scot says (7 Booke, c. xv. p. 122): "It is a common saieing; A lion feareth no bugs. But in our childhood our mothers maids haue so terrified vs with an ouglie diuell hauing hornes on his head, fier in his mouth . . . eies like a bason, fanges like a dog, clawes like a beare, a skin like a Niger, and a voice roring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we heare one crie Bough: and they haue so fraied us with bull beggers, spirits, witches, urchens, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, sylens, kit with the cansticke, tritons, centaurs, dwarfes, giants, imps, Valcars, conjurors, nymphes, changlings, *Incubus*, Robin good-fellowe, the spoorne, the mare, the man in the Oke, the hell waine, the fierdrake, the puckle, Tom thombe, hobgoblin, Tom tumbler, boneles, and such other bugs, that we are afraid of our owne shadowes; in so much as some never feare the diuell, but in a darke night; and then a polled sheepe is a perillous beast, and manie times is taken for our fathers soule, speciallie in a churchyard, where a right hardie man heretofore scant durst passe by night, Out his haire

would stand upright." So also (7 Booke, c. ii. p. 105): "And know you this by the waie, that heretofore Robin goodfellow and Hob goblin were as terrible, and also as credible to the people, as hags and witches be now; and in time to come, a witch will be as much derided and contemned, and as plainlie perceived, as the illusion and knaverie of Robin goodfellow. And in truth, they that mainteine walking spirits, with their transformation, &c., have no reason to denie Robin goodfellow, upon whom there hath gone as manie and as credible tales, as upon witches; saving that it hath not pleased the translators of the Bible to call spirits by the name of Robin goodfellow, as they have termed diviners, soothsaiers, poisoners, and couseners by the name of witches."

Halliwell, in his *Memoranda on The Midsummer-Night's Dream*, 1879, notes that Tarlton, in his *Newes out of Purgatorie*, 1589, says of Robin Goodfellow that he was "famozed in everie old wives chronicle, for his mad merrie pranks"; and further notes, "Nash, in his *Terrors of the Night*, 1594, observes that the Robin Goodfellowen, elves, fairies, hobgoblins of our latter age, did most of their merry\*pranks in the night; then ground they malt, and had hempen shirts for their labours, daunst in greene meadows, pincht maids in their sleep that swept not their houses cleane, and led poor travellers out of their way notoriously."

(g) Shakespeare was apparently the first to connect with fairy-lore the juice with which Oberon ordered Puck to anoint the eyes of Titania and the Athenian lovers. He may have got the suggestion from the *Diana* of Montemayor, since the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, a play which

undoubtedly preceded *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, shows him to have been acquainted with it. "I have toiled," says Furness (p. 283), "through the four hundred and ninety-six weary, dreary falsetto folio pages of Montemayor's *Diana* without finding any conceivable suggestion for the fairy story other than that of the love-juice" (III. ii. 37). Yong's English translation of the *Diana* was not published till 1598; but according to the preface it was written sixteen years before; and Shakespeare may therefore have seen it in MS., or, as is much more probable, have gathered the incident indirectly from another quarter. In the tale a charm is used to transfer the affections of one shepherd "illimitably in love" from one object to another, just as the affections of Lysander and Demetrius are transferred in the play. But surely we need not be driven to gather our simples from the *Diana*. The idea of a love philtre or distillation from herbs or flowers for this purpose is surely common enough in classical and mediæval literature.

By an easy transition we pass from the "love-juice" to the well-known passage in the second Act of the play in which Shakespeare introduces its source, "the little western flower."

This famous passage, the speech of Oberon to Puck (II. i. 148-168), has given rise to much speculation and conjecture; and many attempts have been made to interpret it as an allegory. Rowe apparently was the first to point out that some kind of allegory was intended; and, according to him, it amounted to no more than a graceful compliment to Queen Elizabeth. He says (*Life*, p. 8): "Queen Elizabeth had several of the plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her

favour. It is that maiden Princess, plainly, whom he intends, by a 'fair vestal throned by the west'; and that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in and very handsomely apply'd to her."

Warburton's interpretation takes the point of view of a political allegory. "By the vestal," he says, "every one knows is meant Queen Elizabeth. It is very natural and reasonable then to think that the Mermaid stands for some eminent person of her time . . . of whom it had been inconvenient for the author to speak openly, either in praise or dispraise. All this agrees with Mary Queen of Scots and no other. Queen Elizabeth could not bear to hear her commended; and her successor would not forgive her satirist. . . . She is called a *Mermaid*—(1) to denote her reign over a kingdom situate in the sea, and (2) her beauty and intemperate lust, 'ut turpiter atrum Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne,' for as Elizabeth, for her chastity, is called a *Vestal*, this unfortunate lady, on a contrary account, is called a *Mermaid*. . . . 'On a dolphin's back' evidently marks out that distinguishing circumstance of Mary's fortune, her marriage with the Dauphin of France, son of Henry II. 'Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath' alludes to her great abilities of genius and learning which rendered her the most accomplished Princess of her age. . . . 'That the rude sea grew civil at her song': By rude sea is meant Scotland encircled with the ocean; which rose up in arms against the Regent, while she was in France. But her return home presently quieted these disorders. . . . 'And certain stars shot madly from their spheres': by which he meant the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who fell in her quarrel; and principally the great

Duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with her was attended with such fatal consequences."

Warburton's allegorical interpretation seems to have been accepted by Johnson and Capell; while, on the other hand, Steevens could not dissemble his doubts concerning it. "Is it probable," he asks, "that Shakespeare (who understood his own political as well as poetical interest) should have ventured such a panegyric on this ill-fated Princess, during the reign of her rival Elizabeth? If it was unintelligible to his audience, it was thrown away; if obvious, there was a danger of offence to her majesty."

Ritson was excessively severe in his comments on what he calls Warburton's "chimerical allegory of which the poet himself had no idea, and which the commentator, to whose creative fancy it owes its existence, seems to have very justly characterised in telling us it is 'out of nature'; that is, as I conceive, perfectly groundless and unnatural."

Boaden (*On the Sonnets*, 1837, p. 18) thought it not at all improbable that the groundwork of Oberon's description was the pageant of "*The Princlie Pleasures at Kenilworth Castle*," which the Earl of Leicester devised for the Queen's entertainment in 1575; and that Shakespeare, who was then eleven years of age, might have been a spectator. "His description," says Boaden, "is exactly such as, after 17" [rather 19] "years had elapsed, a reminiscence would suggest to a mind highly poetical."

The Rev. N. J. Halpin in his *Oberon's Vision*, 1843, printed by the Shakespeare Society, follows Boaden in identifying the scene of Oberon's vision with that of the "*Princlie Pleasures*," and pushes the allegory, if allegory there be, to the utmost limit of refinement, and with the

utmost fulness of detail. With regard to the princely pleasures, Halpin relies for his interpretation on the collation of three contemporary authorities which the curious reader may further consult at his pleasure, namely, Laneham's *Letter: whearin Part of the Entertainment untoo the Queenz Majesty, at Killingworth Castle in Warwick Sheer, in this Soommerz Progreſt 1575, iz signified*; Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures, with the Masque intended to have been presented before Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle*; and Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. Halpin considers that these authorities afford sufficient evidence "to identify the time and place of Oberon's Vision with the Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth"; and comparing "the poetical allegory (in juxtaposition) with a simple paraphrase of the literal meaning which has been assigned to it," he finds—putting it shortly—that the "promontory" on which Oberon sat was a rising ground or *bray*—probably "the Brayz" mentioned by Laneham as "linking a fair park with the Castle on the South"—that "Cupid all armed flying between the cold moon and the earth" refers to the Earl of Leicester, in the magnificence of his preparations for storming the heart of his royal mistress, wavering in his passion between (Cynthia or) Queen Elizabeth and (Tellus or) the Lady Douglas, Countess of Sheffield. The "certain aim at the fair vestal throned by the west" is the well-directed effort for the hand of Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. The quenching of the fiery shaft means that Leicester's desperate venture was lost in the pride, prudery, and jealousy of power which invariably swayed the tide of Elizabeth's passions; and the Virgin Queen departed from Kenilworth Castle

unshackled with a matrimonial engagement, and as heart-whole as ever. The remainder of the allegory he construes as follows: the "little western flower" is Lettice, the wife of Walter, Earl of Essex, formerly pure and innocent, but afterwards inflamed with a criminal passion for Leicester, and the subject of shame and obloquy.

This interpretation of Halpin's is certainly characterised by the most remarkable skill and ingenuity; but one great difficulty in accepting it is the necessity for recognising the blending of allegory and fact, to which latter we immediately descend on hearing Oberon's command, "Fetch me that flower": unless, indeed, we are to imagine some subtle Ovidian metamorphosis of the Countess Lettice into a veritable little flower of the west. This is admirably expressed in the quotation which follows.

Hunter (*New Illustrations*, 1845, i. 291) adheres to the allegorical interpretation of Warburton, at least as to the Mermaid representing the Queen of Scots; and he further remarks: "At the very time when at the sea maid's music certain stars shot from their spheres, the strong dart aimed by Cupid against Elizabeth fell innocuous; and she passed on 'In maiden meditation fancy-free.' The allegory ends here, according to all just rule, when the flower is introduced. This flower was a real flower, about to perform a conspicuous part in the drama, and the allegory is written expressly to give a dignity to the flower; it is the splendour of preparation intended to fix attention on the flower, whose peculiar virtues were to be the means of effecting some of the most important purposes of the drama. The passage resembles, in this respect, one a little before, in which there is an interest given to



the little henchman by the recital of the gambols of Titanja with his mother on the sea-shore of India, and the interest thrown around Othello's handkerchief. The allegory has been complete, and has fulfilled its purpose when we come to the flower, which, in the hands of the poet, undergoes a beautiful metamorphose, and has now acquired all the interest which it was desirable to give it, and poetically and dramatically necessary, considering the very important part which was afterwards to be performed by it."

Except, perhaps, in respect of the one distinct creation—Bottom—there is no great effort on Shakespeare's part at the delineation of "character" in this play. The types of the "human mortals" are already familiar to us in the plays antecedent to the *Dream*; and Theseus, so far from being Shakespeare's "early ideal of a heroic warrior and man of action" (Dowden), is, in my opinion, drawn, and purposely drawn, in the barest outline—just sufficient to furnish a frame for the picture in which the fairies are the protagonists.

A remarkable article in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1848, referring to the old division of the characters into three parties or groups, namely, the heroes (including the lovers), the fairies, and the artisans, advances the hypothesis that the fairies are the primary conception of the piece, and their action the main or dominant action. The article so fully expresses my own views on the point, that I am induced to quote it at some length. "The first of these" [*i.e.* parties or groups] "consists of the heroes, Theseus and his very unhistorical court. These are themselves fanciful and unsubstantial; not, indeed, creatures of the

elements, yet scarcely the men and women of flesh and blood with whom Shakespeare has elsewhere peopled his living stage. We cannot but suspect there is a meaning in their mythological origin. Shakespeare has neither drawn them from history, his resource when he wished to paint the broader realities of life, nor from the lights and shadows, the gay gallantry and devoted love, of the Italian novel. They are apparently selected purely for their want of association. Their humanity is of the most delicately refined order; their perplexities the turbulence of still life. Moreover, the components of the group, the pairs of Athenian lovers, seem only to be so distributed in order to be confused. There are no distinctive features in their members. Lysander differs in nothing from Demetrius, Helena in nothing but height from Hermia. Finally, they speak a great deal of poetry, and poetry more exquisite never dropped from human pen; but it is purely objective, and not in the slightest degree modified by the character of the particular speaker. Turn we now to the second group. If the first were as far as possible removed from everyday experience, these are types of a class ever ready to our hand. They are of the earth, earthy. Bottom sat at a Stratford loom, Starveling on a Stratford tailoring-board; between them they perhaps made the doublet which captivated the eyes of Richard Hathaway's daughter, or the hose that were torn in the park of the Lucys. If the former personages were all of one coinage, the characters of the latter are stamped with curious marks of difference. The πολυπραγμοσύνη of Bottom, the discretion of Snug, the fickleness of Starveling are (as Hazlitt has shown) minutely and fancifully dis-

criminated. And most strongly, too, is the homely idiomatic prose of their dialogue contrasted with the blinding brilliancy of those rhymed verses which speak the eternal language of love by the mouths of the Athenian ladies and their lovers. In short, they are the very counterpart of the former group; and it is this that we wish to establish: an intentional antagonism between the two. They seem to us, in their respective delicacy and coarseness, to mark the two extreme phases of life, the highest and the lowest, as presented to the imaginative faculty; the lowest, as it may be seen by experience,—the highest, as it may be conceived of in dreams.

"In Act II. we are presented for the first time with a new creation, that of the Fairies. Henceforward, the first two actions, so remarkably separated in Act I., are gradually interwoven with the third, though nowhere with each other. In the beings of whom this third group is composed, nothing is so characteristic as the humanity of their motives and passions—humanity modified by the peculiarities of the fairy race—such as might be expected in a duodecimo edition of mankind. We find working in them splenetic jealousy, love, hatred, revenge, all the passions of men,—the littlenesses of soul brought out by each, being, as we think, designedly exaggerated. Their movements, too, are eminently significant of a vigorous dramatic action, the story being almost epical in form,—the tale of the *μῦθος Ὀβερώνος*; of which, as it gradually and uniformly advances, we are enabled to trace in the play the origin, development, and consequences. The hypothesis, then, which we wish to put forward is, that the *fairies* are the primary conception of the piece, and

## INTRODUCTION

their action the main action; that Shakespeare wished to represent this fanciful creation in contact with two strongly marked extremes of human nature; the instruments by which they influence them being, aptly enough, in one case the ass's head, in the other the 'little western flower.'

"It is necessary to this idea that the two actions of the heroes and the artisans should be considered completely subordinate, and their separate relations among themselves as not having been created relatively to the whole piece, but principally to the intended action of the fairies upon them. We shall then have the singular arrangement of the first Act purposely designed to exhibit successively the characteristics of the two groups in marked opposition, before exposing them to the influence of the fairies. Finally, the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe is the ingenious machinery by which, after the stage has ceased to be occupied by the fairy action, these two otherwise independent groups are wrought together and amalgamated.

"Some difficulty may yet present itself as to the form of the piece, furnished as it were with a preface and supplement; but we think this can be satisfactorily accounted for. . . . The *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is a dream on the night of Midsummer Day; a night sanctified to the operations of fairies, as Hallowe'en was to those of witches. The play is distributed into three distinguishable portions, those included in Act I.—in Acts II., III., and the first scene of Act IV.—and in the last scene of Act IV. together with Act V. The second, and by far the most important division, comprehends all the transactions of the Mid-

summer Night;—its action is carefully restricted to the duration of these twelve witching hours (Oberon having, as he says, to perform all before 'the first cock crow'), while those of the first and third portions take place at distances of two days and one day respectively. Here, then, we have a stringent reason for Shakespeare's arrangement. He could not introduce us to the two subordinate groups, show us their isolated relations, and in the end interweave them by a consistent process, without separating them, when operating *per se*, from the main action. He could, for instance, neither account for the appearance of the lovers in the wood without a previous exposition of their difficulties, and of the agreement to fly on the 'morrow deep midnight,' nor for that of the stage-struck artisans, without some intimation of the intention to act a play, which made a rehearsal necessary. He could not follow his usual practice of developing together the relations and position of all his characters, because the limitation to twelve hours would not admit it—and out of these twelve hours he could not remove the fairy action. So that the first and last sections of the drama, in which the main action does not proceed and only the subordinate groups appear, have nothing to do with the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, but are merely exegetical of it.

“There are some minor indications of the truth of our theory. The very title, for instance, solely applicable as it is to that part of the drama in which the fairies appear, seems not a little significant. . . . Nor is the distribution of blank and rhymed verse unobservable. . . . We have occasionally fancied that, where the objectively poetical element prevails, the dialogue is mostly written in rhyme;

where the dramatic, in the ordinary blank verse of Shakspeare. Both heroes and fairies speak in blank and rhymed verse, but not indifferently. The relations of the subordinate group are generally, though not invariably, conveyed through the imaginative rhymed lines, while the fairies—the *dramatic* personages—rarely quit the vigorous versification we are so well accustomed to.

“We are desirous that the fairies should assume in this play a position commensurate with the influence they must always exercise over English literature. Great as is the importance of combined purity and beauty in a national mythology, the indirect value is even greater. We have escaped much, as well as gained much, if our imagination has conversed with a more delicate creation than the sensuous divinities of Greece or the vulgar spectres of the Walpurgis-Nacht. But whether the *entente cordiale* between England and Fairy-land be for good or for evil, we must at any rate acknowledge that the connection virtually began on that very Midsummer Night which witnessed the quarrel between Oberon and Titania.”

Critical and “æsthetic” appreciations of the play have been numerous, and, on the whole, satisfactory; and therefore I do not propose to attempt to add anything in this behalf which might be styled “original,” but rather to quote, as briefly as possible, some of the more distinguished passages from well-known critics of the nineteenth century. Hazlitt, in his *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays*, 1817, says: “Puck is the leader of the fairy band. He is the Ariel of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*; and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel of *The Tempest*. No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the

same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution, who is touched with a sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a madcap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those whom he misleads — 'Lord, what fools these mortals be!' Ariel cleaves the air, and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne along on his fairy errand like the light and glimmering gossamer before the breeze. He is, indeed, a most epicurean little gentleman, dealing in quaint devices, and faring in dainty delights. Prospero and his world of spirits are a set of moralists; but with Oberon and his fairies we are launched at once into the empire of the butterflies. How beautifully is this race of beings contrasted with the men and women actors in the scene, by a single epithet which Titania gives to the latter, 'the human mortals'! And again: "In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* alone we should imagine there is more sweetness and beauty of description than in the whole range of French poetry put together. What we mean is this, that we will produce out of that single play ten passages, to which we do not think any ten passages in the works of the French poets can be opposed, displaying equal fancy and imagery. Shall we mention the remonstrance of Helena to Hermia, or Titania's description of her fairy train, or her disputes with Oberon about the Indian boy, or Puck's account of himself and his employments, or the Fairy Queen's exhortation to the elves to pay due attendance upon her favourite, Bottom; or Hippolyta's description of a chase, or Theseus's answer? The two last are as heroical and spirited as the others are full of luscious tenderness. The reading of this play is like wandering in a

grove by moonlight ; the descriptions breathe a sweetness like odours thrown upon beds of flowers."

Hallam, in his *Literature of Europe*, 1839, (vol. ii. p. 387), remarks : " This beautiful play evidently belongs to the earlier period of Shakespeare's genius ; poetical as we account it, more than dramatic, yet rather so, because the indescribable profusion of imaginative poetry in this play overpowers our senses till we can hardly observe anything else, than from any deficiency of dramatic excellence. For in reality the structure of this fable, consisting as it does of three, if not four actions, very distinct in their subjects and personages, yet wrought into each other without effort or confusion, displays the skill, or rather instinctive felicity, of Shakespeare, as much as in any play he has written. . . . The *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original, in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet, the fairy machinery. A few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner with popular superstition ; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals' among the personages of the drama. . . . The language of *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is equally novel with the machinery. It sparkles in perpetual brightness with all the hues of the rainbow ; yet there is nothing overcharged or affectedly ornamented. Perhaps no play of Shakespeare has fewer blemishes, or is from beginning to end in so perfect keeping ; none in which so few lines could be erased, or so few expressions blamed. His own peculiar idiom, the dress of his mind, which began to be discernible



in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is more frequently manifested in the present play. The expression is seldom obscure, but it is never in poetry, and hardly in prose, the expression of other dramatists, and far less of the people."

Knight, in his *Supplementary Notice*, 1840, says: "We can conceive that with scarcely what can be called a model before him, Shakespeare's early dramatic attempts must have been a series of experiments to establish a standard by which he could regulate what he addressed to a mixed audience. The plays of his middle and mature life, with scarcely an exception, are acting plays; and they are so, not from the absence of the higher poetry, but from the predominance of character and passion in association with it. But even in those plays which call for a considerable exercise of the unassisted imaginative faculty in an audience, such as *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, where the passions are not powerfully roused and the senses are not held enchained by the interests of the plot, he is still essentially dramatic. . . . To offer an analysis of this subtle and ethereal drama would, we believe, be as unsatisfactory as the attempts to associate it with the realities of the stage. With scarcely an exception, the proper understanding of the other plays of Shakespeare may be assisted by connecting the apparently separate parts of the action, and by developing and reconciling what seems obscure and anomalous in the features of the characters. But to follow out the caprices and illusions of the loves of Demetrius and Lysander, of Helena and Hermia; to reduce to prosaic description the consequence of the jealousies of Oberon and Titania; to trace the Fairy Queen under the most fantastic of deceptions, . . . and finally to

go along with the scene till the illusions disappear, . . . such an attempt as this would be worse than unreverential criticism."

De Quincey, in his biography of Shakespeare (*Works*, vol. xv. p. 1, edition of 1863), says: "In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakespeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede: they are like—'like, but oh, how different!' And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself, and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords."

F. J. Furnivall, in his *Introduction to the "Leopold" Shakspeare*, 1877, says: "Here at length we have Shakspeare's genius in the full glow of fancy and delightful fun. The play is an enormous advance on what has gone before. But it is a poem, a dream, rather than a play; its freakish fancy of fairy-land fitting it for the choicest chamber of the student's brain, while its second part, the broadest farce, is just the thing for the public stage. . . . And certainly anything must be possible to the man who could in one work range from the height of Titania to the depth of Bottom. . . . Though the story is Greek, yet the play is full of English life. It is Stratford which has given Shakspeare the picture of the sweet country schoolgirls working at one flower, warbling one song, growing together like a double cherry, seeming parted, but yet a union in

partition. It is Stratford that has given him the picture of the hounds with 'ears that sweep away the morning dew.' It is Stratford that has given him his outdoor woodland life, his clowns' play, and the clowns themselves, Bottom, with his inimitable conceit, and his fellows, Snug and Quince, etc. It is Stratford that has given him all Puck's fairy-lore, the cowslip's tale, the red-hipt bumble-bee, Oberon's bank, the pansy love-in-idleness, and all the lovely imagery of the play. But wonderful as is the mixture of delicate and ærial fancy with the coarsest and broadest comedy, clearly as it evidences the coming of a new being on this earth to whom anything is possible, it is yet clear that the play is quite young. The undignified quarrelling of the ladies, Hermia with her 'painted May-pole,' her threat to scratch Helena's eyes,—Helena with her retorts, 'She was a vixen when she went to school,' etc,—the comical comparison of the moon tumbling through the earth (III. ii. 52), incongruously put into an accusation of murder, the descent to bathos in Shakspeare's passage about his own art, from 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' to 'how easy is a bush supposed a bear,' would have been impossible to Shakspeare in his later development."

"*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*," says Professor Dowden (*Primer*, p. 70), "is a strange and beautiful web, woven delicately by a youthful poet's fancy. What is perhaps most remarkable about the play is the harmonious blending in it of widely different elements. It is as if threads of silken splendour were run together in its texture with a yarn of hempen homespun, and both these with lines of dewy gossamer and filaments drawn from the moonbeams.

. . . As the two extremes of exquisite delicacy, of dainty elegance, and, on the other hand, of thick-witted grossness and clumsiness, stand the fairy tribe and the group of Athenian handicraftsmen. The world of the poet's dream includes the two—a Titania, and a Bottom the weaver—and can bring them into grotesque conjunction. No such fairy poetry existed anywhere in English literature before Shakspeare. The tiny elves, to whom a cowslip is tall, for whom the third part of a minute is an important division of time, have a miniature perfection which is charming. They delight in all beautiful and dainty things, and war with things that creep and things that fly, if they be uncomely; their lives are gay with fine frolic and delicate revelry. Puck, the jester of Fairyland, stands apart from the rest, the recognisable 'lob of spirits,' a rough 'fawn-faced, shock-pated little fellow, a very Shetlander among the gossamer-winged, dainty-limbed shapes around him.'"

These standard "appreciations" may be most fitly wound up by the eloquent remarks of Swinburne, in his "*Three Stages of Shakespeare*," in the *Fortnightly Review* for January 1876: "But in the final poem which concludes and crowns the first epoch of Shakespeare's work, the special graces and peculiar glories of each that went before are gathered together as in one garland 'of every hue and every scent.' The young genius of the master of all poets finds its consummation in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The blank verse is as full, sweet, and strong as the best of Biron's or Romeo's; the rhymed verse as clear, pure, and true as the simplest and truest melody of *Venus and Adonis* or the *Comedy of Errors*. But here each kind of excellence is equal throughout; there are here no purple patches on a

gown of serge, but one seamless and imperial robe of a single dye. Of the lyric and prosaic part, the counter-change of loves and laughers, of fancy fine as air, and imagination high as heaven, what need can there be for any one to shame himself by the helpless attempt to say some word not utterly unworthy?"

Mr. Morton Luce, the editor of *The Tempest* in the Arden Shakespeare, 1902, dealing with the characteristics of that play as an autobiography of Shakespeare, has some admirable remarks in his comparison of the two plays (pp. li-lxx). Therein he points out that "three plays stand out from the rest in respect of autobiographical interest and suggestion: they are *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*; they reveal their author at the outset, the middle, and the close of his career." Among points of similarity he places "the intimate acquaintance with nature, the freshness, spontaneity, and fidelity of its literary presentment"—a faculty possessed, as he points out, by no other poet of the time. "Next to this, the freshness, profusion, and freedom of metaphorical expression, of imagery, of figurative language generally." The reader is best referred to the whole of these interesting and thoughtful passages on Shakespeare's literary and artistic development.

Another interesting discussion on certain alleged points of resemblance between *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *Titus Andronicus* appears in Mr. Bellyse Baildon's edition of the latter play in the Arden Shakespeare, 1904 (Introduction, p. lxvi *sqq.*). He instances the despotic claims of the fathers in both plays, the wood and its loneliness, the hunting episode, and the ducal marriage, together with the

leading ideas in the plot, *e.g.* the marrying a captive queen by Theseus and Saturninus, and the changing of brides in the one and the criss-cross love-making in the other, and the use in both plays of the Pyramus and Thisbe legend. Yet he is also fain to confess that the two plays afford more contrast than resemblance. To me it seems that these points of resemblance and contrast are more fanciful than real; and I certainly do not agree with him in his opinion that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was in all probability written a year or two after *Titus Andronicus*. A period of five or six years, is, I think, much more probable; and Mr. Baidon's own description of the points of contrast between the two plays (p. lxvii *sqq.*) seems to me to warrant this belief.

For the sake of general convenience, all references to plays of Shakespeare are to the Act, scene, and line of the *Globe* edition. It is a matter of some regret that in the numbering of the lines in parts of this play, notably in the prose passages, it has not been found convenient to adhere to the numeration of the *Globe* edition.

I have made it a point, so far as was possible to carry it out, of acknowledging all my sources of assistance, even in the case of the older editors. I am indebted for considerable help to Dr. H. H. Furness's *New Variorum* edition, rather as a collection or indication of notes and excursions than for any original remarks of that worthy and industrious editor; and also in a similar way to the *Cambridge Shakespeare* for its critical notes, even for the hopeless rubbish which is therein enshrined—enshrined, it seems to me, as a solemn warning of what is to be avoided in textual criticism. I am indebted to Mr. P. Å. Daniel for

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an interesting note on the fairy "orbs" or circles referred to in II. i. 2, which will be found in Appendix II. Finally, I have the greatest possible pleasure in expressing my thanks to Mr. W. J. Craig, the general editor of the Arden Shakespeare, for his unwearied diligence and courtesy in placing at my service many selections from his great storehouse of notes in all departments of Elizabethan literature. Wherever it was found possible to make use of these, they have been acknowledged in their places in the notes.

A word of thanks is also due to the printers for the careful and generally accurate manner in which they have executed their necessary, though, I fear, not always appreciated task.

# A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens.*

EGEUS, *Father to Hermia.*

LYSANDER, } *in love with Hermia.*  
DEMETRIUS, }

PHILOSTRATE, *Master of the Revels to Theseus.*

QUINCE, *a Carpenter.*

SNUG, *a Joiner.*

BOTTOM, *a Weaver.*

FLUTE, *a Bellows-mender*

SNOUT, *a Tinker.*

STARVELING, *a Tailor.*

HIPPOLYTA, *Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.*

HERMIA, *daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.*

HELENA, *in love with Demetrius.*

OBERON, *King of the Fairies.*

TITANIA, *Queen of the Fairies.*

PUCK, or ROBIN GOOD-FELLOW, *a Fairy.*

PEASEBLOSSOM, }  
COBWEB, } *Fairies.*  
MOTE, }  
MUSTARD-SEED, }

*Other Fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on  
Theseus and Hippolyta.*

SCENE: *Athens, and a Wood near it.*

<sup>1</sup> First given by Rowe.

# SUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

## ACT I

E. I.—*Athens. The Palace of Theseus.*

THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and  
Attendants.

For Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
Is past in space; four happy days bring in  
The moon: but O, methinks, how slow  
The moon wanes! she lingers my desires,  
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,  
Patching out a young man's revenue. 5

[. . .] The Duke's Palace in Athens Then told. Enter . . .]  
Hippolyta, with others (21, 22. 4. *mones*] *mones* Q 1.

vision into acts or  
in the Quarten; the  
vision into acts only.  
into scenes is that  
allowed.

See Introduction.  
et."

active or transitive  
withering out" 11. 1.  
" 11. 1. 112, "child-  
hood 11. 11. 11. 72:

would dissolve the  
e,  
hope lingers in

6. *withering out*] Stevens compares  
Chapman's *Iliad*, iv. 528, "And there  
the goodly plant lies *withering out* his  
grace." Whalley, *Enquiry into the  
Learning of Shakespeare* (1748), quoted  
by Malone, compares Horace, *Epist.* i.  
l. 21:

"ut piger annus  
Pupilla, quon dura premit custodia  
matrum;  
Sic mihi tarda fluunt ingrataque  
tempora."

(I. also *Merry Wives*, i. i. 284, "I  
keep but three men and a boy yet, till  
my mother be dead."

*Hip.* Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;  
 Four nights will quickly dream away the time;  
 And then the moon, like to a silver bow  
 New bent in heaven, shall behold the night 10  
 Of our solemnities.

*The.* Go, Philostrate,  
 Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;  
 Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;  
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals;

7. *night*] Q 1; *nights* Q 2, Ff. 8. *nights*] Q 1, Ff; *daies* Q 2. 10.  
*New bent*] Rowe; *Now bent* Qq, Ff; *night*] *height* Daniel conj.

10. *New bent*] Rowe's admirable emendation for the "now bent" of the Qq, Ff. Combinations in "new" are very numerous in Shakespeare. As to the difficulties connected with the duration of the action and the confusion as to the moon's age, see the Introduction.

11. *solemnities*] Cf. iv. i. 187, "we'll hold a feast in great solemnity"; the idea referring perhaps rather to the religious, formal, or ceremonious celebration of Theseus's nuptials than to mere festivity, though no doubt Shakespeare intended it to be general. Shakespeare's use of the word is, as Craig suggests, probably due to his reading of Chaucer, who uses the word in the sense of pomp, outward show, ceremony. See the *Knights Tale*, 10, C. 7., 868 (Skeat):

"And weddede the queene Ipolita,  
 And broghte hir hoom with him  
 in his contree,  
 With muchel glorie and greet  
 solempnitee";

and *Merchant's Tale*, 1709, "Thus been they wedded with solempnitee." Cotgrave has Solennité: "a solemnité or solenne feast."

11. *Philostrate*] a trisyllable, as in v. i. 43, where the Qq give "Philostrate" instead of "Egeus," owing, no doubt, to the parts being doubled by the same

actor. Philostrate, as we have seen, is the name assumed by Arcite in the *Knights Tale*, 1428, ed. Pollard: "And Philostrate he sayde that he highte."

13. *pert*] lively, alert; full of animal spirits (Craig). Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 272, "This pert Biron was out of countenance quite." The word is now somewhat degraded in meaning. Cotgrave has Godinet: "prettie, dapper, feat, peart"; and Godinette: "a pretty peart lass." Skeat, *Dict. s.v.*, shows that the Mid. Eng. "pert" had two sources and two meanings, the latter running somewhat into each other. 1. In some cases "pert" is a corruption of "apert," Fr. *apert*, open, evident, from the Lat. *apertus*; and "pertly" is used for "openly" or "evidently." 2. In the sense of "proud," "impertinent," e.g. "she was proud and peert," Chaucer, C. 7., 3950 (*Reeve's Tale*). The equivalent form, "perk," is older. Cf. "Perke as a peacock," Spenser, *Shep. Kal.*, Feb. 8. As a verb, the latter means to make smart or trim, "to be perked up in a glistering grief," i.e. dressed up, *Henry VIII.* II. iii. 21. The word, as Furness remarks, is still common in New England, and is there used exactly in the Shakespearian sense, and is pronounced as spelled in the Qq "peart," i.e. "peert."

The pale companion is not for our pomp. 15

[Exit Philostrate.

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;  
But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke! 20

The. Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint  
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.

15. [Exit Phil.] Theobald. 19. *revelling*] *revelry* T. White conj. Enter . . . Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and Lysander and Helena, and Demetrius (?) 1; Enter . . . Lysander, Helena . . . (?) 2; Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia . . . Pl.

15. *companion*] fellow: in a deprecatory or contemptuous sense. The words "companion" and "fellow" have exchanged meanings in later usage.

15. *pomp*] in the classic sense, and probably suggested by "funerals" in line 14. See 19. *post*.

15. [Exit Philostrate] If the part of Philostrate was doubled with that of Egeus, as is very probable, Philostrate of course must leave the stage at this point.

19. *pomp*] Cf. *King John*, II. I. 304:

"Shall braying trumpets and loud  
cherish'd drums,

Clamours of hell, be measures of  
our pomp?"

19. *triumph*] a general term for public exhibitions of various kinds, or shows, such as masques, revels, etc. It is frequent in the historical plays. Wright points out that the title of Bacon's 37th Essay is "Of Masques and Triumphs," and that the Essay treats of "masques" alone; consequently they may have been considered

synonymous. Cf. *1 Henry IV.* III. iii. 46, where Falstaff says of Pistol, "(t) thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire light!"

19. *revelling*] The proposed reading "revelry" is ingenious, but unconvincing. Theseus's speech does not necessarily conclude with a rhyming couplet. Whatever may have been the exact pronunciation of revelry in Shakespeare's time, it is extremely probable that key was pronounced "kay"; and Marlowe rhymes it with "play," vol. iii. (ed. Bullen), 287:

"Whose nice perfection in love's  
play

Shall tune me to the highest key."  
Dryden rhymes it with "lay," "away," and "prey."

20. *duke*] frequently applied in the early literature to any great leader. Shakespeare, beyond doubt, found it in *The Knight's Tale*.

21. *Egeus*] a trisyllable, accented on the second syllable; in F 2 "Egeus."

23. *child*] often in Shakespeare with the meaning of female child, girl. See

Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,  
 This man hath my consent to marry her : 25  
 Stand forth, Lysander ; and, my gracious duke,  
 This man hath witch'd the bosom of my child :  
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,  
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child :  
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung, 30  
 With feigning voice, verses of feigning love ;  
 And stolen the impression of her fantasy  
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats ; messengers  
 Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth : 35  
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart ;  
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,  
 To stubborn harshness : and, my gracious duke,

24, 26. *Stand forth, Demetrius . . . Stand forth, Lysander*] as stage-directions in Qq, Ff ; Rowe, *corr.* 27. *This man hath*] Qq, F 1, Collier, Keightley ; *This hath* F 2, 3, 4 ; *witch'd*] Theobald, Warburton, Johnson, Dyce, Keightley, Hudson ; *bewitch'd* Qq, Ff. 31. *feigning love*] *feigned love* Hanmer. 35. *unhardened*] *unhardened* Qq, *unhardned* F 1.

*Winter's Tale*, III. iii. 71, "a very pretty barne ! A boy or a child, I wonder ?" where the usage is probably, like "barne," dialectic.

27.] The reading of the Qq, Ff may be supported from *Cymbeline*, IV. ii. 47 : "This youth, howe'er distress'd, appears he hath had Good ancestors."

31. *feigning voice . . . feigning love*] Rowe's spelling, for the "faining . . . faining" of the Qq, Ff seems more appropriate to the gist of Egeus's charge against Lysander, namely, the stealing and cunning filching of Hermia's heart. But Furness prefers the older reading used in its not unusual sense of "loving," "longing," "yearning." "Surely," he says, "there was nothing feigned nor false in Lysander's love, nor any discernible reason why he should sing

in a falsetto voice." Craig thinks the meaning here may be "low," "plaintive," and that Shakespeare may be quibbling on the musical sense of the word, which is to sing softly, hum an air. The *Promptorium Parvulorum* (c. 1440), 153, 1, has "Feynyf yn syngynge, or syngne lowe." And Palsgrave (1530), 548, 1, "We maye nat syngne out . . . but lette us fayne this songe." Cf. also T. Wilson, *Rhet.* 72, "He feyneth to the lute marvellouse swetely." *New Eng. Dict. s.v.* The form of the word may be an instance of the indifferent use of the active and passive forms common in Elizabethan English. Cf. III. ii. 31, "distracted fear."

33. *conceits*] Cotgrave : Gentilleses, "pretty conceits," devices, knacks, feats, trickes."

Be it so she will not here before your grace  
 Consent to marry with Demetrius, 40  
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens;  
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her:  
 Which shall be either to this gentleman  
 Or to her death; according to our law,  
 Immediately provided in that case. 45

*The.* What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid:  
 To you your father should be as a god;  
 One that composed your beauties; yea, and one  
 To whom you are but as a form in wax,  
 By him imprinted, and within his power 50  
 To leave the figure, or disfigure it.  
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman

*Her.* So is Lysander.

*The.* In himself he is:  
 But, in this kind, wanting your father's voice,  
 The other must be held the worthier. 55

*Her.* I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

*The.* Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

*Her.* I do entreat your grace to pardon me.  
 I know not by what power I am made bold;  
 Nor how it may concern my modesty, 60  
 In such a presence here, to plead my thoughts;

39. *so*] Cf. III. ii. 314, "so you will let me quiet go."

45. *Immediately*] expressly, precisely. Stevens considered the line to have "an undoubted mark of legal commonplace." No doubt; but the "commonplace" exactly suits the speaker and the occasion. See Rush-ton, *Shakespeare a Lawyer*, 1858, p. 38: "Contrary to the form of the statute in that case made and provided"

is the allegation which concludes indictments for offences which are contrary to the statute; if the offence is indictable at common law the concluding words are, 'against the peace of our lord the King, his crown and dignity.' 54. *in this kind*] in this respect, *i.e.* of marriage.

54. *voice*] Cf. *All's Well*, II. III. 60, "O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice I have to use."

But I beseech your grace, that I may know  
The worst that may befall me in this case,  
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

*The.* Either to die the death, or to abjure 65

For ever the society of men.

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,  
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,  
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,  
You can endure the livery of a nun : 70

For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,  
To live a barren sister all your life,  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.

Thrice blessed they, that master so their blood,  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ; 75

But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,

74. *their*] *there* Q 1. 76. *earthlier happy*] *earlier happy* Rowe (ed. 2); *earthly happier* Capell, Knight, Collier, Singer, Staunton; *earthly happy* Steevens conj.; *earthlier-happy* Walker, Dyce, Hudson.

65. *die the death*] This expression seems to be used by Shakespeare always of judicial punishment. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. xiv. 26, "She hath betrayed me and shall die the death"; and *Cymbeline*, iv. ii. 96, where Cloten evidently considers himself the instrument of justice in slaying an outlaw (Guiderius).

68. *Know of*] "Ascertain from your youth" (Staunton).

69. *Whether*] A monosyllable in pronunciation, and very frequently so in Shakespeare.

70. *livery*] formerly signified any distinctive dress. Cf. II. i. 113, "their wonted liveries"; and numerous other passages in Shakespeare.

70. *nun*] Used for the Delphic priestess in North's *Plutarch* (1631), p. 2 (Life of Theseus): "But Egeus desiring (as they say) to know how he might have children, went unto the City

of Delphes, to the Oracle of Apollo: where by a Nunne of the temple, this notable prophetic was giuen him for an answer." Cf. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, i. 212 (Bullen), "whose nun you are."

71. *mew'd*] confined, shut up; properly a term in falconry. Cf. *Richard III.* i. i. 132, and elsewhere; and, see R. Holme's *Academy of Armory*, etc., ii. c. xi.: "Mew is the place, whether it be abroad or in the house in which the Hawk is put during the time she casts, or doth change her feathers."

75. *pilgrimage*] Cf. *As You Like It*, III. ii. 137:

"Some, how brief the life of man  
Runs his erring pilgrimage."

76-78.] The idea of the married state being preferable to the single is not uncommon in Shakespeare. It appears in the *Sonnets*; see especially *Sonnets* 1, 5, 54; it appears in Touch-

Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn  
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.

*Her.* So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up 80  
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke  
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

*The.* Take time to pause: and, by the next new moon,  
(The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,  
For everlasting bond of fellowship.) 85  
Upon that day either prepare to die,  
For disobedience to your father's will;  
Or else, to wed Demetrius, as he would:  
Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life. 90

*Dem.* Relent, sweet Hermia;—and, Lysander, yield  
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

*Lys.* You have her father's love, Demetrius;

81. *whose unwished*] Qq, F 1; to *whose unwished* F 2, 3; to *whose unwish'd* F 4. 87. *your*] you F 2.

stone's sentiment in *As You Like It*, III. iii. 56, "Is the single man therefore blessed?" Walker quotes from the *Colloquies* of Erasmus (Colloq. Proci et Puellæ): "Ego rosam existimo feliciorē, quæ marescit in hominis manu, delectans interim et oculos et nares, quam quæ senescit in frutice." Cf. Lyly, *Midas*, II. i.: "You bee all young and faire, endeavour all to bee wise and vertuous; that when, like roses, you shall fall from the stalke, you may be gathered and put to the still." Cf. also Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, i. 262 (Bullen):

"Virginity, albeit some highly prize it,  
Comper'd with marriage, had you  
tried them both,  
Differs as much as Wine and water  
doth."

*virgin patent*] privilege of virgin-

ity, and the liberty that belongs to it, Wright. Cf. *Othello*, IV. i. 208, "If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her *patent* to offend."

84, 85. *sealing-day . . . bond*] Cf. the legal phraseology of I. i. 45, *ante*, 98, *post*, and "seal of bliss," III. ii. 144.

92. *crazed title*] A title with a flaw. Cotgrave: "Accrazer, to break, burst, craze, bruise." Cf. Chaucer, *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, 934 (ed. Pollard), "I am right siker that the pot was crazed"; Lyly's *Euphues* (ed. Arber), 58, "Yes, yes, Lucilla, well doth he knowe that the glasse once crazed will with the least clappe be cracked"; *King Lear*, III. iv. 175, "grief hath crazed my wits"; and Peele, *David and Bethsabe*, sc. iii. 36, ed. Bullen, "Some dainties easeful to thy crazed soul."



Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

*Ege.* Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love; 95

And what is mine my love shall render him;

And she is mine; and all my right of her

I do estate unto Demetrius.

*Lys.* I am, my lord, as well derived as he,

As well possess'd; my love is more than his; 100

My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,

If not with vantage, as Demetrius;

And, which is more than all these boasts can be,

I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:

Why should not I then prosecute my right? 105

Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,

Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,

And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,

94. *Hermia's*] *Hermia* Tyrwhitt conj. 98. *unto*] *upon* Hanmer. 101  
*fortunes*] *fortune's* Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Warburton, Johnson. 102. *Demetrius*]  
Pope, Hanmer; *Demetrius* Qq, Ff. 104. *beauteous*] *beautious* Qq.  
107. *Nedar's*] *Nestor's* Walker conj.

98. *estate unto*] Cf. *Tempest*, iv.  
i. 85:

"And some donation freely to estate  
On the blest lovers";

and *As You Like It*, v. ii. 13, "All  
the revenue . . . will I estate upon  
you." Furness remarks: "If Shake-  
speare elsewhere discloses the lawyer,  
he betrays the layman here. A lawyer  
would, instinctively almost, say,  
'Estate upon,' or 'on,' as indeed  
Shakespeare has done elsewhere in the  
only two places, I believe, in which he  
has used the verb." But is this not  
hypercriticism? Surely "unto" is  
merely a reminiscence of the *habendum*  
clause of a conveyance.

99. *well derived*] well-born. Cf. *Two  
Gentlemen of Verona*, v. ii. 23, "that  
you are well derived."

104. *beauteous*] "The spelling *beauti-  
ous* in the Quartos may possibly indi-

cate a pronunciation of *ti* like *sh*. If  
so, it is possibly the pronunciation of  
merely the compositors, and it is some-  
what strange that both of them should  
here agree. This is another reminder  
of the gap which lies between Shake-  
speare and us, and of the futility of  
examining microscopically the spelling  
or even the punctuation of his plays as  
they have been transmitted to us." Fur-  
ness.

106. *to his head*] to his face, in his  
teeth. Cf. *Measure for Measure*, iv. iii.  
147: "to the head of Angelo accuse  
him home and home"; *Much Ado*, v. i.  
62: "Know, Claudio, to thy head, Thou  
hast so wrong'd"; and *King Lear*, v.  
iii. 147: "Back do I toss these trea-  
sons to thy head." Craig refers to  
Golding's Ovid's *Metam.* (1611), p. 17,  
"I made complaint to Paris and ac-  
cused him to his head."

Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,

Upon this spotted and inconstant man. 110

*The.* I must confess that I have heard so much,

And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;

But, being over-full of self-affairs,

My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;

And come, Egeus; you shall go with me, 115

I have some private schooling for you both.

For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself

To fit your fancies to your father's will;

Or else the law of Athens yields you up

(Which by no means we may extenuate) 120

To death, or to a vow of single life.

Come, my Hippolyta; what cheer, my love?

Demetrius, and Egeus, go along:

I must employ you in some business

Against our nuptial, and confer with you 125

114. *low*] *low* 21. 118. *fancies*] *fancy* Keightley conj. 125. *nuptial*] *nuptiall* Qq, F 1; *nuptialls* F 2, 3, 4, K<sup>ms</sup>, etc.

110. *spotted*] stained, wicked. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, II. iii. 74, "Spotted, detested, and abominable"; *Richard II.* III. ii. 134, "their spotted souls"; *King Lear*, v. iii. 139, "A most foul-spotted traitor." Colgrave has *Taché*: "spotted, blotched, stained, blamished, disgraced." So Cavendish's *Metrical Vision*, "Spotted with pride, viciousness, and cruelty."

113. *self-affairs*] Cf. *Measure for Measure*, III. ii. 280, "self-offences"; *Troilus and Cressida*, II. iii. 182, "self-breath"; and *Cymbeline*, III. iv. 149, "self-danger."

117. *arm yourself*] Cf. *Hamlet*, III. iii. 24, "Arm you to this speedy voyage."

121. *go*] where we should say "come." Cf. *Twining of the Swan*, IV. v. 7; *Henry IV.* II. i. 191; and *Othello*, I. i. 181.

125. *nuptial*] Shakespeare seems to have preferred the singular to the plural form, and the singular is printed by the editors in every passage where the word occurs, with the exception of *Twelfth*, v. iii. 80, where we have the plural form; but for this Shakespeare is not responsible. Similarly, "funeral" and "funerals." Cf. *Julius Caesar*, v. iii. 105, "His funerals shall not be in our camp." Furness very pertinently remarks: "As long as the source of our knowledge of Shakespeare's language is a text transmitted to us by several compositors, it is hazardous to assert that Shakespeare employs any special form of a word. In the instance from *Othello*, the Qq, it is true, have the plural "nuptials," but the word in the Ff is in the singular, as Wright notes. Cf. *Timost*, v. i. 308.

Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

*Ege.* With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*]

*Lys.* How now, my love? Why is your cheek so pale?

How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

*Her.* Belike, for want of rain; which I could well 130

Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

*Lys.* Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,

127. *Exeunt* . . .] *Exeunt* Manet Lysander and Hermia Ff; *Exeunt* Qq.  
128. *Scene II.*] Pope, Hanmer, Warburton, Fleay. 131. *my*] Qq, *mine* Ff.  
132. *Ay me! for aught that I could ever*] *Eigh me: for aught that I could ever* Qq;  
*ought* Q 2; *For ought that ever I could* F 1; *Hermia for ought that ever I could*  
F 2, 3, 4; *Ay me! for aught that ever I could* Dyce; *Ay me!*] *Ah me!* Johnson.

127. *Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*] "It was a strange oversight on the part of Egeus to leave his daughter with Lysander." Wright. "The plot requires this private conference between Hermia and Lysander, at which the scheme to leave Athens may be arranged. Shakespeare's device to bring about the conference is . . . artificial, . . . In his later plays, when he is more experienced in stage-craft, Shakespeare so contrives his plot that one event springs naturally from another, in accordance with probability." Verity. Pope, Hanmer, and Warburton began a new scene here; but, as the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* was almost certainly printed from a stage copy, the authority of the Folio cannot be ignored or gainsaid, and hence we must keep to the present division into scenes.

129. *chance*] *i.e.* How chances it? as in *Hamlet*, II. ii. 343, "How chances it they travel?" Cf. V. i. 318, *post*.

130. *Belike*] still used in Lancashire.

131. *Beteem*] "pour down upon 'em," Pope. "Give them, bestow upon them," Johnson. Capell considers "beteem them" stands for "beteem to

them," *i.e.* the roses, and that the word is used in the sense of a pouring out. So Steevens. Staunton, Grant White, and Knight consider the meaning to be "afford," "yield," "allow"; and this sense is no doubt suitable here. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. ii. 141, "that he might not beteem the winds of heaven"; the only other passage in Shakespeare where the word occurs, and means "permit," "allow." Dyce paraphrases, "to give in streaming abundance." The sense of the passage would seem to be simply "pour on or for them." The word meant "to be pregnant," "to be full of"; and is certainly still used in the North of England, Scotland, and Ireland in the sense of pouring, *e.g.* "it is teeming," "it is a teeming day," "it is teeming with rain"; and Swift uses it in the sense of "pour." Cf. "stalled" in *King Lear*, III. vii. 64. Craig remarks that as Shakespeare very often plays on the two meanings of a word, no doubt he does so here.

132. *Ay me!*] The "*Hermia*" of Ff, 3, 4 is certainly more impressive than the mere self-pitying exclamation of Lysander, and gives a certain amount of point and pathos to the opening of

Could ever hear by tale or history,

The course of true love never did run smooth:

But, either it was different in blood ;— 135

*Her.* O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!

*Lys.* Or else misgrafted in respect of years ;—

*Her.* O spite! too old to be engaged to young!

*Lys.* Or else it stood upon the choice of friends ;—

*Her.* O hell! to choose love by another's eyes! 140

*Lys.* Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it;

133. *hear]* *here* Q 1. 136. *low]* Theobald; *loue* Qq, Ff. 138. *to young]*  
*too young* F 4. 139. *friends]* Qq, *merit* Ff, *men* Collier. 140. *eyes]* Qq;  
*eye* F 1; *eye* F 2, 3, 4.

his speech; but on the balance of probability the reading of the Qq "Eigh me," *i.e.* "Ay me," seems preferable, and cannot be disregarded. Bp. Newton, in his edition of Milton (1749), long ago called attention to the resemblance between Lysander's complaint and that of Adam, in *Paradise Lost*, x. 898-906.

136, 138, 140.] It seems clear that, as Halliwell says, "the author evidently intended both the speakers should join in passionately lamenting the difficulties encountered in the path of love." Coleridge, however, *Notes and Lectures* (1874 ed.), 101, says: "There is no authority for the alteration; but I never can help feeling how great an improvement it would be if the two former of Hermia's exclamations were omitted (*i.e.* lines 136, 138): and the third and only appropriate one would then become a beauty and most natural."

136. *low]* Theobald's excellent reading for the "loue" of the Qq, Ff. He thinks Hermia answering Lysander's complaint of the difference in blood must necessarily say low, and that in this way the antithesis is kept up in the terms. This is one of the curses pro-

phesied by Venus, in *Venus and Adonis*, 1131-1140, "Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend," etc.

137. *misgrafted]* *i.e.* ill-grafted. "The form 'graft' is corrupt and due to a confusion with 'grafted,' originally the past-participle of 'graft.' Shakespeare has 'grafted,' *Macbeth*, iv. iii. 51; but he has rightly also 'graft' as a past-participle, *Richard III.* iii. vii. 127. Cf. *As You Like It*, iii. ii. 124, "I'll graft it with you, and then I shall graft it with a medlar."

139. *friends]* The reading of the Qq, for which the Ff substitute "merit." "The substitution," says Furness, "can hardly be deemed either a compositor's sophistication or an accident. A change so decided must have been made with authority; it is a change, moreover, not from an obscure word to a plainer word, but from a plain word to one more recondite in meaning. A 'choice of merit' is a choice enforced through desert or as a reward, qualities with which true love or 'sympathy in choice' can have nothing in common. It is a choice good enough in itself, but worldly-wise, calculating, one of the roughest of obstructions to the course of true love, in that it may be urged by

# 14 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM [ACT I.]

Making it momentany as a sound,  
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;  
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night, 145  
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,  
 And ere a man hath power to say,—Behold!  
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:  
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

*Her.* If, then, true lovers have been ever cross'd 150

143. *momentany*] Qq, *momentarie* Ff.  
 148 *do*] to F 3, 4.

146. *spleen*] *sheen* Hanmer conj. MS.

parents so plausibly; and this very urging is implied in Hermia's phrase of choosing 'by another's eye,' and possibly the vehemence of her expletive indicates that this obstruction is the worst of the three. But, with the exception of Rowe and R. G. White (in his first edition), all editors have adopted 'friends' of the Quartos, and only two have any remarks on it."

143. *momentany*] "The old and proper word." Johnson. "Momentany seems to have been the earlier form, from Fr. *momentanie*, Lat. *momentaneus*." Wright. Craig quotes two early examples: "Everything in this world is caduke, transitory, and momentany," Bp. Fisher's *Works* (Mayor, *Early Eng. Text Soc. Ed.*), p. 196; and "And therefore besought him that he would not preferre an uncertain and momentany benefit." Daniel's *History of England*, ed. iii. (Grosart, *Works*, iv. 215). And see Tyndall's translation of 2 Cor. iv. 17, "oure excedinge tribulation which is momentany and light."

144. *Swift as a shadow*] Furness compares *Romeo and Juliet*, II. v. 4:

"love's heralds should be thoughts,  
 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,  
 Driving back shadows over lowering hills."

145. *lightning*] Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii. 120:

"Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,

Ere one can say, 'It lightens.'"

145. *collied*] here in the literal sense, "blackened," "smutted." Cotgrave: "Charbonné, painted, marked, written with a coale, collowed, smeered, blacked with coales; (hence) also darkened." Grose (*Provincial Glossary*) gives, "*Colley*, the black or soot from a kettle." In the literal sense, cf. Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, iv. iii. 242, "Thou hast not collied thy face enough"; and in the metaphorical of "darkened," cf. *Othello*, II. iii. 211, "and passion having my best judgment collied."

146. *in a spleen*] in a flash, a violent haste; implying a sudden outburst, e.g. of some passion. Similarly, of swift or violent motion, in *King John*, II. i. 448, "with swifter spleen than powder can enforce"; and v. vii. 50, "scalded with my violent motion And spleen of speed to see your majesty!" Shakespeare uses the word with the other meanings of "humour, caprice, and inconstancy" (Johnson); and of violent mirth, as "the spleen was anciently supposed to be the cause of laughter" (Steevens).

150. *ever cross'd*] always crossed. Cf. "customary cross," 153, *post*, and "still," 212, *post*.

It stands as an edict in destiny;  
Then let us teach our trial patience,  
Because it is a customary cross;  
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,  
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers. 155

*Lys.* A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.  
I have a widow aunt, a dowager  
Of great revenue, and she hath no child;  
And she respects me as her only son.  
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues: 160  
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;  
And to that place the sharp Athenian law  
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,  
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;  
And in the wood, a league without the town, 165  
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To do observance to a morn of May,

154. *due*] *draw* Q 1. 159, 160. *And . . . leagues*] transposed according to Johnson's conj., adopted by Keightley and Hudson; *From . . . son* Qq, Fl. 160. *remote*] Qq, *remov'd* Fl. 167. *to a*] Qq, Capell, etc.; *for a* Fl; *to the* Pope, etc.

151. *edict*] accented on the ultimate, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, i. i. 11: "This late edict shall strongly stand in force"; but on the penultimate in *Henry IV.* iv. iii. 79.

155. *fancy's*] i.e. love's; frequent in Shakespeare. Cf. in this play, "fancy-free," ii. i. 170; "fancy-sick," iii. ii. 99; "Faint Helena, in fancy, follow'd me," iv. i. 160; and "fancy-monger," *As You Like It*, iii. ii. 385.

156. *persuasion*] "persuasive argument" (Wright), or "decision"; not (as Schmidt) "opinion," "belief."

159, 160.] Johnson proposed to transpose these lines as they stand in the Qq, Fl, and I think rightly. Cf. v. i. 275, 276; 426, 427.

159. *resp. to*] regards, looks upon me.

160. *remote*] the reading of the Qq is adopted by almost all subsequent editors. Furness, however, prefers the Folio reading, and quotes *Hamlet*, i. iv. 61, "It waves you to a more removed ground"; and *As You Like It*, iii. ii. 360, "so removed a dwelling."

167. *observance*] Cf. iv. i. 29; and Chaucer, *The Knights Tale*, 1500 (ed. Pollard), "and for to doon his observance to May"; and his *Troilus and Criseide*, ii. 112, "and let us don to May some observance." "Scarcely an English poet from Chaucer to Tennyson is without a reference to the simple customs by which our ancestors celebrated the advent of the flowers," Wright.

There will I stay for thee.

*Her.*

My good Lysander!

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,  
By his best arrow with the golden head, 170  
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,  
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,  
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,  
When the false Trojan under sail was seen;  
By all the vows that ever men have broke, 175  
In number more than ever women spoke;  
In that same place thou hast appointed me,  
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

*Lys.* Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

*Enter HELENA.*

*Her.* God speed, fair Helena! Whither away? 180

*Hel.* Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

171, 172. *By the . . . loves*] transposed by Singer (ed. 2). 172. *loves*] Q 1; *loue* Q 2, Ff. 180. *Scene III.*] Pope; *speed, fair*] Theobald, *speed fair* F 1. 182. *your fair*] Qq, *you fair* Ff, *you, fair* Rowe (ed. 2).

169. *Cupid's . . . bow*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 581, "by Cupid's bow he doth protest."

170. *best arrow*] alluding to the arrows of Ovid's *Metam.*, i. 467, in Golding's translation, in which Shakespeare was well versed:

"Therefrom his quiver full of shafts  
two arrows he did take  
Of sundry powers; one causeth  
Love, the tother doth it slake.  
That causeth loue is all of golde,  
with point full sharpe and  
bright,  
That chaseth loue is blunt, whose  
steale with leaden head is  
dight."

Cf. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, i.

161 (Bullen), "Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head"; and Sidney's *Arcadia*, II., "But arrowes two and tipt with gold or lead." Cf. also *Twelfth Night*, i. i. 35:

"How will she love when the rich  
golden shaft  
Hath killed the flock of all affec-  
tions else  
That live in her."

172.] The allusion is "most probably to the *cestus* of Venus," Keightley, *Expositor*, 1867.

174. *Trojan*] So Qq, F 1.

182. *your fair*] The "you" of F 1 makes admirable sense; the first "fair" being then taken as an adjective, *i.e.* Demetrius loves you who are

Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air  
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear  
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear. 185  
 Sickness is catching; O, were favour so,  
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;  
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190  
 The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
 O, teach me how you look; and with what art  
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

*Her.* I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

186. *so,* Qq, Ff; *so!* Theobald. 187. *Yours would I* Hanmer; *Your words I* Qq, F 1; *Your words I* F 2, 3, 4. 188. *ear . . . voice* hair . . . hair Hudson (Lettsom conj.). 189. *tongue* voice Cartwright conj. 191. *I'd* I'd Hanmer, White ii., Keightley, Hudson; *ile* Q 1; *Ile* Q 2, F 1, 2; *I'le* F 3, 4.

fair; and the second "fair" as a substantive, of course in the sense of fairness, beauty, which is very common in Shakespeare.

183. *lode-stars*] leading or guiding stars. Cf. *Lucrece*, 179:

"Whereat a waxen torch forthwith  
 he lighteth,  
 Which must be lode-star to his  
 lustful eye";

and Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*, 2059:

"how woful Calysto . . .  
 Was turned from a womman to a  
 bere,  
 And after was sche maad the lode-  
 sterre."

Sir John Maundevile in his *Travels* (ed. Halliwell, p. 180) thus describes the "lode-star": "In that Lond, ne in many othere beyonde that, no man may see the Sterre transmontane, that is clept the Sterre of the See, that is unmovable, and that is toward the Northe, that we clepen the Lode-Sterre."

186. *favour*] "that is, feature, coun-

tenance," Steevens. It refers, I think, to the personal qualities of physical beauty enumerated 188 *sgg.* Cf. *As You Like It*, iv. iii. 87: "The boy is fair, Of female favour"; and the play upon the word in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 33:

"An if my face were but as fair as  
 yours  
 My favour were as great."

187. *Yours would I catch*] the excellent emendation of Hanmer. It is impossible to defend the reading of the Qq or Ff; and even Furness deserts the Folio here.

188, 189. *My ear should catch . . . melody*] There is no reason for any change of reading here. It was surely necessary for Helena's ear to catch Hermia's voice before her own tongue should catch the sweet melody of her rival's. For the rhyme of "eye" with "melody," cf. II. ii. 13, 14.

190. *bated*] excepted, lit. abated.

191. *translated*] transformed. See III, i. 121,



*Hel.* O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!  
195

*Her.* I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

*Hel.* O, that my prayers could such affection move!

*Her.* The more I hate, the more he follows me.

*Hel.* The more I love, the more he hateth me.

*Her.* His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

*Hel.* None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

*Her.* Take comfort; he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me: 205

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

*Lys.* Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

200. *folly, Helena, is no fault*] Q 1; *folly, Helena is none* Q 2, Ff; *fault, oh Helena, is none* Hammer; *fault, faire Helena, is none* Collier; *Helena*] *Helen* Dyce (ed. 2), Hudson. 201. *beauty*] F 1, *beauty's* Hudson (Daniel conj.). 205. *as*] Q 1; *like* Q 2, Ff. 207. *unto a*] Q 1; *into* Q 2, Ff; *unto* Boswell.

200. *no fault of mine*] So Q 1, and the majority of editors; Q 2 and Ff having "none of mine." Furness adheres to the text of F 1, and remarks: "If we assume that Hermia is trying to comfort her dear friend with assurances of her enduring love, then there is a charm in this asseveration, in the Folio, that she does not share in Demetrius's folly, which gives hate for love, but that she returns love for love; and her words become sympathetic and caressing. But if we adopt the text of Q 1, Hermia's words have a faint tinge of acerbity (which, it must be confessed, is not altogether out of character), as though she were defending herself from some unkind imputation, and wished to close the discussion (which would also be not unnatural). It is again in favour of the Quarto that Helena replies, 'would *that* fault were

mine.' The demonstrative 'that' seems clearly to refer to a 'fault' previously expressed. This weighs so heavily with Capell that he says the word 'fault' must 'of necessity have a place' in Hermia's line. Lastly, it is in favour of the Folio that Helena's first words are Hermia's last. 'It is none of mine,' says Hermia. 'It is none of yours,' assents Helena."

207. *unto a hell*] Dyce, *Remarks*, 44, says: "The context, *a* heaven, is quite enough to determine that the reading of Fisher's 4to (*i.e.* Q 1), *unto a hell*, is the right one, excepting that *unto* should be *into*. Cf. a well-known passage of Milton:

'The mind in its own place and in itself

Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven,'

*Paradise Lost*, i. 254."

To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold  
 Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210  
 Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,  
 A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,  
 Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

*Her.* And in the wood, where often you and I  
 Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie, 215  
 Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet;  
 There my Lysander and myself shall meet:  
 And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
 To seek new friends and stranger companies.  
 Farewell, sweet playfellow; pray thou for us, 220  
 And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!

213. *gates*] Qq, F 1, 2; *gate* F 3, 4. 216. *sweet*] Theobald; *sweld* Qq, Ff.  
 219. *stranger companies*] Theobald, etc.; *strange companions* Qq, Ff. 221.  
*thy*] *thine* Rowe (ed. 2).

211. *liquid pearl*] Cf. II. i. 15,  
 "And hang a pearl in every cowslip's  
 ear."

212. *still*] always, constantly. Cf.  
 "ever," 150, *ante*.

215. *faint primrose-beds*] "faint" is  
 here, I think, an epithet of colour,  
 hardly of smell. See *Winter's Tale*,  
 IV. iv. 122, "pale primroses, That die  
 unmarried"; and *Cymbeline*, IV. ii.  
 221, "the flower that's like thy face,  
 pale primrose." Marshall points out  
 that Shakespeare uses "pale" and  
 "faint" together, namely, in *King  
 John*, v. vii. 21, "I am the cygnet to  
 this pale faint swan."

219. *stranger companies*] Theobald's  
 happy conjecture for "strange com-  
 panions." He remarks: "This whole  
 scene is strictly in rhyme, and that it  
 deviates . . . I am persuaded is owing  
 to the ignorance of the first and the  
 inaccuracy of the later editors; I  
 have, therefore, ventured to restore the  
 rhymes, as I make no doubt but the poet  
 first gave them. 'Sweet' was easily

corrupted into 'sweld,' because that  
 made an antithesis to 'emptying';  
 and 'strange companions' our editors  
 thought was plain English, but 'stranger  
 companies' a little quaint and unintel-  
 ligible. Our author elsewhere uses  
 the substantive 'stranger' adjectively,  
 and 'companies' to signify 'com-  
 panions.' See *Richard II.* I. iii. 143,  
 'But tread the stranger paths of banish-  
 ment'; and in *Henry V.* I. i. 53,  
 'His companies unletter'd, rude and  
 shallow.' And so in a parallel word,  
 'My riots past, my wild societies,'  
*Merry Wives*, III. iv. 8." Steevens  
 and Halliwell adhere to the Folio read-  
 ings. Dyce believes that more certain  
 emendations were never made; Wright  
 considers that the rhyme is decisive in  
 favour of Theobald's conjecture; and  
 Furness that in a modernised text  
 Theobald's emendations should be  
 adopted unquestionably. It is an ex-  
 ample of the confusion of the final "e"  
 and "er."

Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight  
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

[Exit *Hermia*.]

*Lys.* I will, my *Hermia*.—*Helena*, adieu:

As you on him, *Demetrius* dote on you! 225

[Exit *Lysander*

*Hel.* How happy some, o'er other some can be!

Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.

But what of that? *Demetrius* thinks not so;

He will not know what all but he do know.

And as he errs, doting on *Hermia's* eyes, 230

So I, admiring of his qualities.

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,

Love can transpose to form and dignity.

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;

And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind: 235

Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;

Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:

And therefore is Love said to be a child,

225. *dote*] Qq, *dotes* Ff. 229. *do*] Qq, *doth* Ff. 232. *vile*] Qq, F 4: *vilde* F 1, 2, 3; *quantity*] *quality* Johnson conj. 237. *figure*] Rowe, *figure*, Qq, Ff; *haste*] *hast* F 4.

225. *dote*] The "dotes" of the Folio is a clear instance of the interpolation of the final "s," early recognised by Pope as an error, and acknowledged by every subsequent editor.

226. *other some*] "A quaint but pretty phrase, of frequent occurrence in early works," Halliwell. See *Measure for Measure*, III. ii. 94, "other some, (say) he is in Rome"; and Chapman's Fifth Sestiad of *Hero and Leander*, line 387, vol. iii. (Bullen).

231. *admiring*] Cf. *King Lear*, II. i. 41, "Mumbl'ing of wicked charms."

232. *quantity*] perhaps here meaning "proportion, corresponding degree."

So in *Hamlet*, III. ii. 177, "For women's fear and love holds quantity"; i.e. keep proportion to each other (Dowden); and *Merry Wives*, v. v. 235:

"*Fent*. You would have married her most shamefully,  
Where there was no proportion held in love."

So "holding no quantity" may be "where there is no proportion held in worth," Craig. "Having no proportion to the estimate formed of them," Wright. Chambers thinks the word is here used in the sense of "large quantity."

Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear, 240  
 So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:  
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,  
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt. 245  
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
 Then to the wood will he, to-morrow night,  
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:  
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain, 250  
 To have his sight thither, and back again. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*Athens. Quince's House.*

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOOT,  
 and STARVELING.*

*Quin.* Is all our company here?

239. *he is so oft*] Q 1; *he is oft* Q 2; *he is often* F 1; *he often is* F 2, 3, 4.  
 240. *in game themselves*] *themselves in game* F 3, 4. 244. *this*] Q 1, Ff; *his*  
 Q 2. 245. *So he*] *Lo, he* Capell; *Soon it* Rann; *Soon he* Daniel conj. 248.  
*this*] Qq, *his* Ff.

*Scene II.*

*Scene II.*] Capell; *Scene IV.* Pope. Quince's House] A Room in Quince's house Capell; changes to a cottage Theobald. Enter . . .] Enter Quince, the Carpenter; and Snugge, the Ioyner; and Bottom, the Weauer; and Flute, the Bellows mender; and Snout, the Tinker; and Starueling, the Tayler Q 1; Enter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Ioyner, Bottome the Weauer, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, and Starueling the Taylor Q 2, Ff.

249. *dear expense*] "A painful purchase, a bitter bargain. 'If I have thanks, the sacrifice which I make in giving Demetrius this information will be doubly distressing to me.' Of course she would much rather that Demetrius, her old lover, did not thank her for setting him on the traces of his new mistress. Thanks would be a

mockery in the circumstances, and this is what Helena means to say . . . The 'sight' of Demetrius and not his 'thanks' was to be Helena's recompense." W. N. Lettsom (*Blackwood*, Aug. 1853).

*Scene II.*

"In this scene Shakespeare takes advantage of his knowledge of the

*Bot.* You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

*Quin.* Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night. 5

*Bot.* First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point. 10

*Quin.* Marry, our play is—The most lamentable comedy,

3. *according to*] Q 1, Ff; *according* Q 2. 10. *grow to a point*] Qq, etc.; *grow on to a point* F 1, 2, 3; *grow on to appoint* F 4; *go on to a point* Warburton; *go on to appoint* Collier.

theatre to ridicule the prejudices and the competitions of the players. Bottom, who is generally acknowledged the principal actor, declares his inclination to be for a tyrant, for a part of fury, tumult, and noise, such as every young man pants to perform when he first steps upon the stage. The same Bottom, who seems bred in a tiring-room, has another histrionical passion. He is for engrossing every part, and would exclude his inferiors from every possibility of distinction. He is therefore desirous to play Pyramus, Thisbe, and the Lion, at the same time." Johnson.

2. *You were best*] i.e. to or for you it were best, a well-known construction.

2. *generally*] a Bottomism for "severally," "particularly," "individually."

3. *scrip*] script, list. Cf. its use, in the sense merely of a written document, in Holland's *Pliny*, vii. canto 25 (of Julius Cæsar), "When upon the battell at Pharsalia, as wel the coffers and caskets with letters and other writings of Pompey as also those of Scipioes before Thapsus came into his hands, he was most true unto them, and burnt al, without reading one script or scroll."

4. *scroll*] This word, coming as it

does immediately after "scrip," seems to indicate that Shakespeare had the above quoted passage from Holland's *Pliny* in his mind.

7. *wedding-day at night*] Cf. *Romæ and Juliet*, I. iii. 21, "On Lammæve at night shall she be fourteen." Craig refers to Lyly (ed. Fairholt), i. 215: "GALLATHEA, Played before the queenes majestie at Greenwich on New-Yeeres day at Night by the children of Paules."

10. *grow to a point*] Bottom probably means no more than come to the point. Cf. Peele, *Arraignment of Paris*, II. i.:

"Our reasons will be infinite, I trow,  
Unless unto some other point we grow."

Craig quotes Dekker and Webster's *Northward Ho* (Works, Pearson, 1873, p. 15), "No, I will like a justice of peace grow to the point." Chambers, however, would explain the phrase as meaning "do the thing thoroughly, completely."

11. *lamentable comedy*] See Introduction, and v. i. 56-60. Steevens thought this was very probably a burlesque on the title-page of Cambyzes, *A lamentable Tragedie, mixed full of pleasant Mirth, conteyning the life of*

and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

*Bot.* A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.—Now, good Peter Quince, call forth 15  
your actors by the scroll: Masters, spread yourselves.

*Quin.* Answer as I call you.—Nick Bottom, the weaver.

*Bot.* Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed. 20

*Quin.* You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

*Bot.* What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

*Quin.* A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love. 25

*Bot.* That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in

19. *weaver*] *Weauer*? Q 1. 24. *gallant*] Qq, etc.; *gallantly* Ff. 28.  
*storms*] *stones* Collier.

*Cambises, King of Persia*, etc., by Thomas Preston [? 1561]; but it is doubtful, as Furness rightly remarks, if a burlesque of any particular play was meant.

12.] Warton, *History of English Poetry* (1824), iv. 243, remarks that in 1562 was licensed "the boke of Perymus and Thesbye."

24. *gallant*] Probably this is nothing more than an example of Shakespeare's free use of adjectives as adverbs.

28. *storms*] Does Bottom mean storms of grief or of applause? Cf. *2 Henry VI.* III. i. 349, "I will stir up in England some black storms." Collier's reading, "stones," however, is worth consideration, and cannot be lightly dismissed.

See, for the idea, amongst other passages, *Two Gentlemen*, III. ii. 79, "Orpheus' lute . . . Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones"; *Merchant of Venice*, v. i. 80:

"therefore the poet  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees,  
stones, and floods";  
*Julius Caesar*, III. ii. 234:

"that should move  
The stones of Rome to rise and  
mutiny";  
*Hamlet*, III. iv. 126:

"His form and cause conjoin'd,  
preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable"; and  
*Macbeth*, III. iv. 123:

"Stones have been known to move  
and trees to speak."

some measure. To the rest:—yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play *Ercles* 30 rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

29. *To the rest:—yet*] *To the rest:—yet*, Theobald; *To the rest yet*, Q1, Ff. 31. *cat*] *cap* Warburton; *in, to* in and to Keightley conj. 32. *split*. *The* split—the Theobald; *split the* Qq, F 1, 2, 3; *split to* F 4.

29. *To the rest:—yet*] Go on to name the rest of the players. Yet, stop a moment, my chief humour, etc. Cf. 41, *post*, "Now name the rest of the players." And then Bottom further interrupts.

30. *Ercles*] "In Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit*, 1592, a player who is introduced says: 'The twelue labors of *Hercules* haue I terribly thundered on the stage.'" Malone. "Henslowe, in his *Diary*, mentions 'the firste part of *Herculous*,' a play acted in 1595, and afterwards, in the same manuscript, the 'two partes of *Hercolus*' are named as the work of Martin Slather or Slaughter. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, ed. 1598, i. 50: 'leaning his hands vpon his bill, and his chin vpon his hands, with the voyce of one that playeth *Hercules* in a play.'" Halliwell. "The part of *Hercules* was like that of Herod in the *Mysteries*, one in which the actor could indulge to the utmost his passion for ranting." Wright.

31. *tear a cat*] Apparently a proverbial phrase for tearing a passion to tatters (*Hamlet*, III. ii. 10). Edwards, *Canons of Criticism*, 1765, p. 52, thinks this a burlesque upon *Hercules*'s killing a lion. Heath, *Revisal of Shakespeare's Text*, 1765, p. 45, takes Warburton's emendation, "cap," seriously, and supposes "it might not be unusual for a player, in the violence of his rant, sometimes to tear his cap." Capell takes Bottom seriously, and supposes "he might have seen 'Ercles' acted, and some strange thing torn, which he mistook for a cat." Cf. Day's *The Isle of Gulls*

(1606), "A whole play of such tear-cat thunderclaps." Steevens remarks: "In Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 1611, v. 1, there is a character called 'Tearcat,' who says, 'I am called by those who have seen my valour Tear-cat.'" In an anonymous piece, called *Histrionastix*, 1610, a captain says to a company of players:

"Sirrah, this is you would rend and tear the cat

Upon a stage, and now march like a drown'd rat."

(Act v. p. 73, ed. Simpson.)

32. *all split*] Cf. *The Tempest*, i. i. 65, "we split, we split!"; Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady*, II. iii., "Two roaring boys of Rome, that make all split"; and their *Wild Goose Chase*, v. vi., "I love a sea voyage and a blustering tempest, and let all split." Dyce says the phrase was a favourite expression with our old dramatists. In his *Few Notes*, 1853, p. 61, he believes it has not been remarked that the expression is properly a nautical phrase, and quotes Greene's *Newer too Late*, sig. G3, ed. 1611, "He set downe this period with such a sigh, that, as the *Marriners* say, a man would haue thought *al would haue split againe*." Craig quotes Middleton's *Witch* (ed. Dyce, Works, iii. 282), "I'll make you eat your word, I'll make all split else"; and his *Roaring Girl*, IV. ii. (ii. 518, ed. Dyce), "If I sail not with you both till all split." This whole passage is further illustrated by *Hamlet*'s well-known advice to the players, III. ii. 1 sqq.

"The raging rocks,  
And shivering shocks,  
Shall break the locks 35  
Of prison-gates;  
And Phibbus' car  
Shall shine from far,  
And make and mar  
The foolish fates." 40

This was lofty!—Now name the rest of the players.—This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

*Quins.* Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

*Flu.* Here, Peter Quince. 45

*Quins.* Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

*Flu.* What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

*Quins.* It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

*Flu.* Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming. 50

33-40.] As in Johnson; prose in Qq, Ff. 34. *And*] With Farmer conj.  
43. *lover*] *lover's* Hudson (Daniel conj.). 44. *bellows-mender*] *Bellows*  
*mender*? Q 1. 46. *Flute*,] Q 1; omitted Q 2, Ff.

33-40.] Printed as prose in the Qq, Ff. I am inclined to think Rolfe is right in suggesting that the lines may be a burlesque of a translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, 1581. He quotes:

"O Lord of ghosts! whose fiery flash  
That forth thy hand doth shake,  
Doth cause the trembling lodges  
twain

Of Phcebus' car to shake" . . .

"The roaring rocks have quaking  
stir'd,

And none thereat hath push'd;  
Hell gloomy gates I have brast ope

Where grisly ghosts all hush'd  
Have stood."

Shakespeare's lines do not read like

a quotation from any actual play. Surely Shakespeare himself was quite capable of turning them out for the purposes of this play.

37. *Phibbus' car*] Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. viii. 28, "carbuncled like holy Phcebus' car"; and *Cymbeline*, v. v. 190, 191, "Phcebus' wheel. . . Been all the worth of's car." Craig thinks Shakespeare got the idea from Golding's Ovid's *Metam.*, Book ii.

47. *wandering knight*] Cf. 1 *Henry IV.* i. ii. 17, "Phcebus, he, that wandering knight so fair." Craig.

50. *a beard coming*] On the Elizabethan stage female parts were played by boys. Craig refers to Lodge's



*Quin.* That's all one; you shall play it in a mask,  
and you may speak as small as you will.

*Bot.* An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby  
too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice:—  
"Thisne, Thisne,—Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! 55  
thy Thisby dear! and lady dear!"

*Quin.* No, no; you must play Pyramus; and, Flute,  
you Thisby.

*Bot.* Well, proceed.

*Quin.* Robin Starveling, the tailor. 60

*Star.* Here, Peter Quince.

*Quin.* Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's  
mother.—Tom Snout, the tinker.

53. *An*] Pope; *And* Qq, Ff. 54. *too*] *to* Qq. 55. *Thisne, Thisne*] *Thisby, Thisby* Hammer. 60. *tailor*] *Tailer*? Q 1. 63. *tinker*] *Tinker* }

*Rosalynde* (ed. Newnes, 1902, p. 13), "with that casting up his hand he felt hair on his face, and perceiving his beard to bud, for choler he began to blush, and swore to himself that he would be no more subject to such slavery." Cf. the well-known passage in *Hamlet*, II. ii. 442, "Thy face is valanced since I saw thee last."

52. *speak as small*] Bottom's "monstrous little voice," 54. *post.* Cf. Chaucer's *The Flower and the Leaf*, 180, "with voices sweet entuned and so smalle"; *Merry Wives*, I. i. 49, of Anne Page, "She has brown hair and speaks small like a woman"; and *King Lear*, v. iii. 272, "Her voice was ever soft, Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman." Craig refers to Golding's Ovid's *Metam.*, Book ii. f. 21(a) (ed. 1612): "anon his voice began More shrill and small than for a man"; also to North's *Plutarch* (ed. ii., 1595, p. 1007), "besides her voyce was small and trembling" (of Cleopatra).

55. "*Thisne, Thisne*"] "The words

are printed in italic in the old copies, as if they represented a proper name, and so 'Thisne' has been regarded as a blunder of Bottom's for Thisbe. But as he has the name right in the very next line, it seems more probable that 'Thisne' signifies 'in this way'; and he then gives a specimen of how he would 'aggravate' his voice. 'Thissen' is given in Wright's *Provincial Dictionary* as equivalent to 'in this manner'; and 'thissens' is so used in Norfolk." Wright. Shakespeare may have written the word simply "thisen"; hence the corruption.

63. *mother*] "There seems a double forgetfulness of our poet in relation to the characters of this Interlude. The father and mother of Thisbe, and the father of Pyramus, are here mentioned, who do not appear at all in the Interlude; but 'Wall' and 'Moonshine' are both employed in it, of whom there is not the least notice taken here," Theobald. "What the moderns call a forgetfulness in the poet was in truth

*Snout.* Here, Peter Quince.

*Quin.* You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father;— 65  
*Snug*, the joiner, you, the lion's part:—and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

*Snug.* Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

*Quin.* You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but 70  
 roaring.

*Bot.* Let me play the lion, too; I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again." 75

*Quin.* An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

*All.* That would hang us, every mother's son.

*Bot.* I grant you, friends, if you should fright the 80  
 ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an'twere any nightingale. 85

66. 67. *and, I hope, here] and I hope here* Qq, *and I hope there* Ff, *I hope there* Row (ed. 2). 69. *# do be* F 1. 76. *An]* Capell; *And Q 1; If Q 2, Ff.* 80. *friends] friend* F 4; *if]* Qq, *if that* Ff. 83. *you]* Qq, omitted Ff. 85. *an]* Pope; *and* Qq, Ff.

his judgement: [these parts] promised little, and had been long in expectation; whereas Quince's 'Prologue' and the other actors, 'Moonshine' and 'Wall,' elevate and surprise," Capell. "The introduction of Wall and Moonshine was an afterthought; see III. i. 59 and 67," Stevens.

83. *aggravate]* Bottomesse for "moderate," or some such word. Cf. *Henry*

IV. ii. iv. 175, Mrs. Quickly's "I beseech you now, aggravate your choler."

84. *sucking dove]* It is idle to dismiss Bottom's language, as some editors do, on the ground that it is "idle to try and convert intentional nonsense into sense," Furness. In his "bottomisms" there is always some soul of sense if we observingly distil it out.

*Quin.* You can play no part but Pyramus: for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

*Bot.* Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I 90 best to play it in?

*Quin.* Why, what you will.

*Bot.* I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your

94. colour] Qq, colour'd Ff.

Here I think the expression must refer to the manner in which young doves are fed. Craig well compares *As You Like It*, I. ii. 97 sqq.:

"*Cel.* Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

*Ros.* With his mouth full of news.

*Cel.* Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young"; and remarks: "*i.e.* with bill placed inside bill. Other young birds gape, and the parent birds drop in the food; but pigeons feed differently, just as they drink differently, viz. like horses, without lifting their heads. Hence the young pigeon alone looks like a sucking animal."

85. *an 'twere*] as if it were. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, I. ii. 188, "He will weep you an 'twere a man born in April." "An" and "and" are frequently confounded.

87. *sweet-faced man*] Craig refers to Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, IV. iv. (Works, ed. Cunningham, p. 109), "Is't not a sweet-fac'd youth, Filia?" and Shirley's *Grateful Servant* (Works, ed. Gifford, II. 21).

87, 88. *as one shall see in a summer's day*] Craig says: "This proverbial expression is found in *Henry V.* III. vi. 67; and see *The Two Angry Women of Abington*, I. v. 99 (Henry Porter).

See also Hazlitt's *Dodsley* (Old Plays), vii. 356: 'as good a man as . . . e'er went on neat's leather, or as one shall say, upon a summer's day.' See also Day, *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green* (Works, Bullen, p. 114)."

93, 94. *straw-colour beard*] Halliwell says: "The custom of dying beards is frequently referred to. 'I have fitted my divine and canonist, dyed their beards and all'—*Silent Woman*. Sometimes the beards were named after scriptural personages, the colours being probably attributed as they were seen in old tapestries. 'I ever thought by his red beard he would prove a Judas'—*Insatiate Countess*, 1613. 'That Abraham-coloured Trojon' is mentioned in *Soliman and Perseda*, 1599; and 'a goodly, long, thick Abraham-colour'd beard' in *Blurt, Master Constable*, 1602. Steevens has conjectured that 'Abraham' may be a corruption of 'auburn.' A 'whay-coloured beard' and 'a kane-coloured beard' are mentioned in the *Merry Wives*, 1602, the latter being conjectured by some to signify a beard of the colour of cane, which would be nearly synonymous with the straw-coloured beard alluded to by Bottom."

94. *orange-tawny*] Cf. III. i. 115. Cotgrave has "Orangé: m. ée. f. orange-tawny, orange-coloured."

purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour 95  
beard, your perfect yellow.

*Quin.* Some of your French crowns have no hair at all,  
and then you will play bare-faced.—But, masters,  
here are your parts: and I am to entreat you,  
request you, and desire you, to con them by to- 100  
morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood,  
a mile without the town, by moonlight; there  
will we rehearse: for if we meet in the city, we  
shall be dogged with company, and our devices  
known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of 105

96. *perfect*] Ff, *perfit* Qq. 103. *will we*] Q 1; *we will* Q 2, Ff.

95. *purple-in-grain beard*] a beard dyed purple, or some shade of red. Cotgrave gives "Migraine: scarlet or purple in graine." The best explanation of the phrase will be found in Marsh's *Lectures on the English Language*, 1860, p. 67: "A species of oak or ilex (*Quercus coccifera*) is frequented by an insect of the genus *coccus*, which, when dried, furnishes a variety of red dyes, and which, from its seed-like form, was called in later Latin *granum*, in Spanish *grana*, and *graine* in French; from one of these is derived the English word grain, which, as a colouring material, strictly taken, means the dye produced by the *coccus* insect, often called in the arts *kermes* [the Arabic and Persian name of the insect] . . . The colour obtained from kermes or grain was peculiarly durable; . . . another phrase was afterwards applied to other colours as expressing their durability. Thus in *Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 107, when Antipholus says, 'That's a fault that water will mend,' 'No, sir,' Dromio replies, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood could not do it.' And again in *Twelfth Night*, I. v. 253, when Viola insinuates that Olivia's complexion had been improved by art,

the latter replies, 'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.' When the original sense of *grain* grew less familiar, it was used chiefly as expressive of *fastness* of colour; and *dyed in grain*, originally meaning dyed with kermes, then dyed with fast colour, came at last to signify dyed in the wool or raw material. The verb *ingrain*, meaning to incorporate a colour or quality with the natural substance, comes from *grain* used in this last sense." Craig refers to Cole's *Lat. Dict.*, 1764, *coccinus*, in grain; and Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, i. 57, Hazlitt's Dodsley, iv. 207, "a villain for his life, a varlet died in grain"; also Holland's *Pliny*, Book xvii., ed. 1601, p. 461, for a curious note on scarlet graine; and North's *Plutarch*, 1595, p. 37, "For he ever wore a coat of purple in grain."

95. *French crown colour*] the yellowish colour of a gold coin. Quince's reply refers to the baldness which resulted from a certain disease then supposed to be more prevalent in France than elsewhere.

102. *without*] a locative use. Cf. IV. i. 150, "without the peril of the Athenian law,"

properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

*Bot.* We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

110

*Quin.* At the duke's oak we meet.

*Bot.* Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*]

108. *most*] Q 1; *more* Q 2, Ff. 109, 110. *Take . . . adieu*] given to Quince by Singer (ed. 2), (Collier). 109. *pains*] Qq, F 1; *paine* F 2, 3, 4. 110. *perfect*] Ff, *perfit* Qq. 112. *hold or cut*] *break or not* Hammer conj. MS.

106. *properties*] The stage requisites of costume or furniture. In Henslowe's *Diary* (p. 273, Shak. Soc.), there is an "Enventary tacken of all the properties for my Lord Admiralles men, the 10 of Marche 1598," wherein we find such items as "j rocke, j cage, j tombe, j Hell mought (*i.e.* mouth)." Again, "Item, ij marchpanes, & the sittie of Rome." "Item, j wooden canepie; owld Mahemetes head," etc. See Halliwell, *ad loc.*, and Collier's *Eng. Dram. Poetry*, iii. 159. See also note on "tiring-house," III. i. 4.

109. *obsценely*] It is not quite certain what word Bottom meant, but probably it was "seemly." See *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. i. 145, for a similar misuse, "When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, so fit."

109-111. *Take pains . . . meet*] Collier thought these words should be given to Quince, as the manager, rather than to Bottom; but the assumption of the manager's duty is entirely characteristic of Bottom.

111. *duke's oak*] Halliwell thinks these localities, "the palace wood" (101), and "the duke's oak," bear some appearance of being derived from English sources, and that they may have been names of places familiar to Shakespeare in his own country. Cf. Herne's oak in the *Merry Wives*, v. iii. 15, 80, etc. "It was in Shakespeare's day in Warwickshire, and it still is the custom in many parts of

England to give such names to large oaks: was this in Shakespeare's mind here?" (Craig). I think it is extremely probable.

112. *hold or cut bow-strings*] "To meet, *whether bow-strings hold or are cut*, is to meet in all events. 'He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string,' says Don Pedro in *Much Ado*, III. ii. 10, 'and the little hangman dare not shoot at him,'" Malone. Capell's explanation, though generally adopted, does not seem authoritative: "When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase: the sense of the person using them being, that he would *hold* or keep promise, or they might *cut* his bow-strings, demolish him for an archer." Malone's explanation is much superior to Capell's. Bottom's final reply to Quince is: "Enough said; we will not fail to meet at the duke's oak—in any event—in *any weather*—whether bow-strings hold or cut." "Hold" and "cut" in this passage are, I think, examples of the "middle" voice, or, more accurately, perhaps, of transitives used intransitively. In very wet weather the bow-string, if not protected, would be more liable to fray and snap asunder. It will be remembered that the English archers at Crecy protected their strings during the thunderstorm which preceded the battle, while the Genoese bowmen did not. If the phrase is not proverbial,—and I

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*A Wood near Athens.**Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy and PUCK.*

*Puck.* How now, *fair spirit*! whither wander you?

*Fai.* Over hill, over dale,

Thorough bush, thorough brier,

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

5

*Act II. Scene 1.*] Rowe. Actus Secundus Ff, omitted Qq. A wood . . .] Capell. Enter . . .] Enter a Fairie at one doore, and Robin Goodfellow at another Qq, Ff. I. Puck.] Rowe, Robin Qq, Rob. Ff; *spirit*!] fair *spirit* Editor; *whither*] Walker Q 2, F. 2-9.] So arranged by Pope, but as four lines in Qq, Ff. 3, 5. *Thorough*] Q 1; *Through* Q 2, Ff.

hardly think it is,—Shakespeare, who must have had a sound knowledge of archery, was quite capable of inventing it for the occasion. See Rushton's *Shakespeare as Archer*, 1897.

*Act II. Scene 1.*

1.] It is not by any means certain that this line is not pure blank verse, and that a word has not dropped out before "*spirit*." Cf. i. i. 180, "God speed, *fair Helena*! *Whither* away?" It is noteworthy that Puck uses only plain blank verse in this scene; and it is not till line 65 of scene ii. of this Act that he adopts a lyric measure. Cf. Oberon's change from his lyric incantation, iv. i. 76-79, to the plain iambic of line 80. Another view is that "*spirit*" and "*whither*" must be treated as monosyllables. See the note on line 33 of this scene, and Walker, *Crit.* i. 183, and *Ven.* 103.

2-17.] Coleridge has been aptly quoted as saying that "this measure

had been invented and employed by Shakespeare for the sake of its appropriateness to the rapid and airy motion of the fairy by whom the speech is delivered." Note the swift rush of the rhythm caused by the use of the amphimacer (—) in lines 2-5, followed by the transition (lines 6-13) to the trochaic measure, indicating the fairy's service of the queen, necessarily less rapid; and, finally (lines 14-17), the slower and statelier iambic measure suitable for a farewell to the "lob of spirits."

3, 5. *Thorough*] the reading of Q 1, and rightly, for the sake of the metre, as in line 106 of this scene. There is a close resemblance to these lines, as Halliwell points out, in Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, vi. 285, "through hills and dales, through bushes and through briers"; the imitation being probably Spenser's; and Drayton imitated them in his *Nymphidia* (1627), 309-311.

I do wander everywhere,  
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
 And I serve the fairy queen,  
 To dew her orbs upon the green:  
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be; 10

7. *than*] Q 1, *then* F; *moon's*] Steevens, Malone, Var., White ii.; *moons* F; *moony* Grant White (Steevens conj.), Hudson. 10. *tall*] *all* Collier.

7. *moon's*] Clearly a disyllable, and an example of the inflected M. E. genitive. The uncontracted form was probably becoming obsolete in Shakespeare's time. So "night's shade," IV. i. 107 of this play; "whale's bone," *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 332, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, III. i. 15; "Earth's increase," *Tempest*, IV. i. 110. Steevens quotes a passage from Sidney's *Arcadia*, Book ii. p. 262 (1598), "Your presence, sister deare, first to my moony spheare." Hudson adopts "moony sphere" on the ground, not only that it is a common poetical phrase, but that it is certain Shakespeare would not have allowed, among lines of exquisite music, a line so unrhymical as this as it stands in the Folio. The true explanation of the form "moon's" is, I think, that it is a reminiscence of Shakespeare's perusal of the *Knights Tale*. See Introduction.

7. *sphere*] In the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, which prevailed when Shakespeare wrote, the earth was conceived as the centre of nine or ten consecutive hollow crystalline spheres or globes, which rotated round it, carrying the moon planets and fixed stars. These spheres or globes were supposed to be swung bodily round the earth in twenty-four hours by the top sphere, the *primum mobile*, thus making an entire revolution in a day and night. See Furnivall, *New Shak. Soc. Trans.* (1877-79), p. 431. Cf. *Tempest*, II. i. 183, "you would lift the moon out of her sphere" (with reference to the belief in the power of a magician over

the heavenly bodies); and Marlowe's *Faustus*, ed. Dyce, 1862, p. 83: "Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere."

9. *dew her orbs*] Halliwell explains orbs as "the well-known circles of dark-green grass frequently seen in old pasture-fields, generally called 'fairy-rings,' and supposed to be created by the growth of a species of fungus, *Agaricus orcadæ*, Linn. These circles are usually from four to eight feet broad, and from six to twelve feet in diameter, and are more prominently marked in summer than in winter." The latest scientific explanation is that of Mr. Sidney Turner (*British Med. Journal*, 28th July 1894), who considers that the "so-called 'fairy-rings' were produced by the better and more vigorous growth of the grass, owing to the excess of nitrogen afforded by the fungi, which composed the ring of the previous year." Cf. *Merry Wives*, V. v. 69:

"And nightly, meadow-fairies, look  
 you sing,  
 Like to the Garter's compass, in a  
 ring";

and *Tempest*, v. i. 36:

"you demi-puppets that  
 By moonshine do the green-sour  
 ringlets make,  
 Whereof the ewe not bites."

See also Douce (*Illustrations of Shakespeare*, i. 180), Brand's *Popular Antiq.* ii. 480 (Bohn), and Dyer, *Folk-lore of Shakespeare*, 15.

10. *cowslips* . . . *pensioners*] Johnson says the cowslip was a favourite among the fairies. The allusion is probably to the Queen's band of gentle-

In their gold coats spots you see;  
 Those berubies, fairy favours,  
 In those freckles live their savours :  
 I must go seek some dew-drops here and there,  
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear. 15  
 Farewell, thou lob of spirits, I 'll be gone;  
 Our queen and all her elves come here anon.  
*Puck.* The king doth keep his revels here to-night;  
 Take heed the queen come not within his sight;

13. *coats*] *cups* Collier. Daniel conj.

14. *here and there*] Hammer; *here* Qq, Ff; *clear*

men pensioners, composed of the hard-  
 some and tallest young men, selected  
 from the best families, and with large  
 fortunes. Cf. *Henry Wars*, II. ii. 79,  
 "and yet there has been ears, nay,  
 which is more, pensioners." "In the  
 month of December, 1539," says Stowe,  
*Annals*, p. 973 (ed. 1615), "were  
 appointed to wait upon the King's  
 person fifty gentlemen called *Pensioners*  
 or *Spencers*, like as they were in the  
 first years of the King."

13. *gold coats*] Cf. *Henry IV.*, IV.  
 i. 29, "glittering in golden coats like  
 images" (of the "madcap Prince of  
 Wales and his comrades").

13, 12. *spots* . . . *rubies*] Probably  
 the well-known spots of a deep yellow,  
 verging to a crimson shade, at the  
 bottom of each leaf or petal. Cf.  
*Cymbeline*, II. ii. 37 :

"On her left breast

A mole cinque-spotted, like the  
 crimson drops

That bottom of a cowslip."

13. *freckles*] Cf. *Henry V.*, v. ii. 49,  
 "The freckled cowslip, burnet, and  
 green clover."

14. *here and there*] Hammer's reading  
 is supported by III. ii. 381, "ghosts  
 wandering here and there"; and  
 if the rhyme of lines 14 and 15 be  
 objected to, the reply is that Shake-  
 speare has contented himself with it

in III. ii. 411, 412. See also II. ii.  
 135, 136. Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*,  
 first sestiad, 59, 60, rhymes "sphere"  
 and "there."

15. *hang a pearl*] Cf. I. i. 211, *ant*,  
 and *Romus and Juleth*, I. v. 48, "like  
 a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear."  
 Halliwell thinks there are two allusions  
 in the line—(1) to the custom of  
 wearing pearls in the ears; (2) to the  
 notion of the old naturalists that the  
 dewdrop was the commencing form of  
 the pearl. See Holland's *Pliny*, Book  
 ix. cap. 35. The passage is imitated  
 in an anonymous play, *The Widome*  
 of *Doctor Dodypoll* (1600), iii. 5 :

"'Twas I that led you through the  
 painted meads,

Where the light fairies danced upon  
 the flowers,

Hanging on every leaf an orient  
 pearl."

16. *lob*] here used by the fairy as  
 descriptive of the contrast between  
 Puck's larger and rougher figure and  
 the airy and delicate shapes of the  
 other elves, at least of those attendant  
 on Titania. Puck is not like the  
 ethereal Titania, "a spirit of no com-  
 mon rate," III. i. 157, *post*. The word  
 is the Celtic *lob*, a clown or dolt, used  
 with a reference to size or awkwardness.  
 Cf. the "lubbar-fiend" and his "hairy  
 strength" of Milton's *L'Allegro*, 110.



For Oberon is passing fell and wrath. 20

Because that she, as her attendant, hath

A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;

She never had so sweet a changeling :

And jealous Oberon would have the child

Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild : 25

But she, perforce, withholds the loved boy,

Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her  
joy :

And now they never meet in grove, or green,

By fountain clear, or spangled star-light sheen,

But they do square ; that all their elves, for  
fear, 30

Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there.

23. *changeling*] a child (usually stupid or ugly) supposed to have been left by fairies in exchange for one stolen, *New Eng. Dict.* See Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I. x. 65, "Such, men do chaungelings call, so chaung'd by Faeries theft." Johnson remarks: "This is commonly used for the child supposed to be left by the fairies, but here for the child taken away." See Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times*, II. 325, and Introduction. Titania's reference to the boy hardly bears out the fairy's account. See lines 123-136, *post*. The word is a trisyllable in this line, but in 120, *post*, it is probably only a disyllable.

25. *to trace*] Cf. *Much Ado*, III. i. 16, "as we do trace this alley up and down"; and Milton, *Comus*, 423, "may trace huge forests and unharboured heaths." I agree with Furness in thinking that there is here a reference to hunting or tracking game, rather than merely "traversing" or "wandering through."

27. *all her joy*] Cf. IV. i. 4, "my gentle joy."

29. *sheen*] a substantive, "brightness," "fairness." Anglo-Saxon *schēne*, Mid. Eng. *schene*, fair, Ger. *schön*. Some editors consider the word to be an adjective in this passage ; but Milton certainly uses it as a substantive in *Comus*, 1003 :

"But far above in spangled  
sheen,  
Celestial Cupid, her fam'd son,  
advanc'd."

30. *square*] quarrel, square their shoulders, come to high words. In Shakespeare's time the word was also in common use as a substantive. Cotgrave gives "Se quarrier : to strut, or square it, looke big on't, carrie his armes a-kemboll braggadochio-like." Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. i. 45, "Twere pregnant they should square between themselves"; and III. xiii. 41, "Mine honesty and I begin to square." Craig refers to North's *Plutarch* (ed. 2, 1595), *Life of Fabius*, "Hannibal hearing of their jarre and squaring together, sought straight opportunitie to make their discord finely to serve his turne."

*Fai:* Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
 Call'd Robin Good-fellow: are not you he  
 That frights the maidens of the villagery; 35  
 Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,  
 And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
 And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;

32. *Either*] Or Pope. 33. *sprite*] Q 1; *spirit* Q 2, Ff. 34. *not you*] Q 1; *you not* Q 2, Ff. 35. *frights*] *fright* F 3, 4; *villagery*] *villageree* Q 1; *villagree* Q 2, F 1, 2, 3; *vilagree* F 4. 36-39. *Skim . . . labour . . . make . . . make . . . Mislead*] Qq, Ff; *Skims . . . labours . . . makes . . . makes . . . Misleads* Collier (Malone conj.). 36. *sometimes*] *sometime* Dyce (ed. 2).

32. *Either*] contracted into a monosyllable in pronunciation. Cf. II. ii. 156, and see Walker, *Vers.* 103, for instances of such contractions.

33. *sprite*] So printed in Q 1. Walker, *Crit.* i. 193, remarks: "It may safely be laid down as a canon that the word 'spirit' in our old poets, wherever the metre does not compel us to pronounce it disyllabically, is a monosyllable." Cf. line 1 of this scene, and see *Macbeth*, IV. i. 127, "Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites" (although Shakespeare may not have written this line).

34. *Robin Good-fellow*] See Introduction.

35, 36. *frights . . . Skim . . . labour*] an example of a change of construction, perhaps caused by a change of thought, and common enough in Shakespeare. Abbott thinks, and rightly, that the transition is natural from Are you *he* that frights? to Do not *you* skim . . . labour? See also Exodus vi. 7.

35. *villagery*] village folk, peasantry. Johnson thought the word meant a district of villages, but it seems rather to mean a number of "villagers." Hence the "maidens of the villagery" simply means peasant maids, or, as Johnson himself calls them, country-girls.

36, 37.] Johnson thought the sense of these lines was confused, on the ground

that the mention of the "quern" or hand-mill, was out of place, as the fairy was not telling the good but the evil done by Robin. Hence he proposed to transpose the lines, or read,

"And sometimes make the breathless housewife churn

Skim milk and bootless labour in the quern."

But, as Ritson correctly points out, we must understand all these to be mischievous pranks. Robin skims the milk when it ought not to be skimmed, and grinds the corn when it is not wanted.

36. *quern*] Anglo-Saxon *cwæorn*, a hand-mill for grinding corn, in its most primitive form, consisting, as Halliwell points out, of a revolving stone worked by a handle moving in the circular cup of a larger one. See Chaucer, *Monkes Tale*, C. T., 3264 (ed. Pollard), of Samson, "Where as they made hym at the querne grynde." Johnson and Boswell in their respective *Tours in the Hebrides*, make mention of this primitive household instrument.

38. *barm*] yeast, leaven, a provincial term yet used, as Steevens remarked, in the Midland counties, and universally in Ireland. Cotgrave has "Leveton: m. Yeast, or Barme." "The froth or barme . . . [has] a property to keepe the skin faire and cleare in women's faces," Holland, *Pliny* (1601), ii. 145.

Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?  
 Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, 40  
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck :  
 Are not you he ?

*Puck.* Fairy, thou speak'st aright ;

I am that merry wanderer of the night,  
 I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,  
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile, 45  
 Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :  
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,

42. *Fairy, thou*] Collier ; *The same, thou* Hanmer ; *I am thou* Johnson ; *spirit, thou* Editor conj. ; *speak'st*] *speakest* Q 1, *speakest me* Capell. 42, 43. *thou* . . .  
*night*] One line in Qq. 46. *filly*] Q 1 ; *silly* Q 2, Ff. 47. *bowl*] F 4 ;  
*bole* Qq, F 1, 2, 3.

39. *Mislead*] Cf. Caliban in *The Tempest*, II. ii. 6 :

"Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark,

Out of my way" ;

Ariel's pranks in IV. i. 178 *sqq.* ; also IV. i. 197, "played the Jack," i.e. the Jack o' lantern. Milton has imitated this passage of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* in his *Paradise Lost*, ix. 634, "mislead the maz'd night-wanderer from his way."

40. *Hobgoblin . . . and sweet Puck*] "Robin Goodfellow and Hob goblin were as terrible . . . as hags and witches be now," Reginald Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), VII. ii. 105. It will be remembered that "Puck" means simply "fiend" or "devil," hence the propitiatory epithet is not superfluous. See Introduction.

42.] The metre is certainly defective. I agree with Dyce in thinking that the introduction of the word "Fairy" at the commencement of Puck's reply is "far better than the other attempts that have been made to complete the metre." The "spirit" of line 1, *ante*, is probably the next best reading. The idea of a pause being "naturally" made before the reply to the fairy's question as

being intended to take the place of the missing foot, which is the idea of R. G. White, Abbott, and Furness, is out of the question. A pause on Puck's part would be anything but natural to Puck.

46. *filly foal*] "filly" is the reading of Q 1, and is almost certainly correct, and for obvious reasons. Furness, as usual, "sees no reason for deserting the Folio."

47. *gossip's bowl*] Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III. v. 175, "utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl." "Originally a christening-cup; for a gossip or 'god-sib' was properly a sponsor. Hence from signifying those who were associated at the festivities of a christening it came to denote generally those who were accustomed to make merry together." Wright. Archbishop Trench (*English Past and Present*, 204, ed. 4) mentions that the word retains its original signification among the peasantry of Hampshire. Warton, in his note to Milton's *L'Allegro*, 100, is probably correct in identifying the "spicy nut-brown ale" with the "gossip's bowl" of Shakespeare. "The composition was ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs or apples. It was called lambs-wool." Cf. the "dog's-nose" of *The Pickwick Papers*, ch. 33.

In very likeness of a roasted crab;  
 And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,  
 And on her wither'd dew-lap pour the ale. 50  
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
 Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
 And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;

49. *bob*] *bab* Gould conj. 50. *dew-lap*] Rowe (ed. 2); *dew-lop* Qq, Ff.  
 54. "*tailor*" ] *rails* or *Hanner*; *traitor* Perring conj. 54, 55. *cough* . . .  
*laugh*] *coffe* . . . *loffe* Qq, Ff.

48. *crab*] the wild apple. See *King Lear*, I. v. 16, "For though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell." Halliwell quotes from Parkinson's *Theat. Botanicum*, 1640, "the fruite is generally small and very sower, yet some more than others, which the country people, to amend, doe generally rost them at the fire, and make them their winter's junkets." No doubt the "gossip's bowl" was included in the "winter cheer" of "the human mortals," line 181, *post.* For the rhyme of "crab" with "bob," cf. the pronunciation of "throstle" in III. i. 130.

51. *wisest aunt*] In this passage, the wisest or most sedate old dame or gossip; but "aunt" is frequently applied to a bawd or loose woman. See, in particular, the "summer songs for me and my aunts" of Autolycus in *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii. 2.

51. *saddest tale*] Cf. *Richard II.* V. i. 40:

"In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
 With good old folks, and let them  
 tell thee tales  
 Of woful ages long ago betid";  
 and *Winter's Tale*, II. i. 25, "a sad tale's best for winter."

54. "*tailor*" ] Johnson observes: "The custom of crying 'tailor' at a sudden fall backwards I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair falls as a tailor squats upon his board": a very doubt-

ful explanation. Equally unsatisfactory is the suggestion of Furness, who says that "the slight substitution of an *e* for an *o* in the word 'tailor' will show that, as boys in swimming take a 'header,' the 'wisest aunt' was subjected to the opposite." Halliwell is very much nearer the mark when he says: "The expression is probably one of contempt, equivalent to 'thief,' and possibly a corruption of the older word 'taylard,' which occurs in the Romance of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, where two French justices term that sovereign, when reviling him, a 'taylard,' upon which the choleric monarch instantly clove the skull of the first and nearly killed the second." The Elizabethan use of the term, as one of contempt, appears to be confirmed by the following passage in *Pasqui's Night Cap*, 1612:

"Thieving is now an occupation made,  
 Though men the name of tailor  
 doe it give."

And see the passage in Middleton's *Changeling*, I. ii. 161 (vol. vi. 23, ed. Bullen), "How many true" [*i.e.* honest] "fingers has a tailor on his right hand?" *Ant.* "As many as on his left, cousin." "Tailor," meaning "thief," would be a natural enough expression even for the "wisest aunt" to utter against the "practical joker" who had deprived her of her stool. The word is probably derived from the French "*tailleur*," to cut; cf. "cutpurse."

54, 55. *cough* . . . *laugh*] "In the

And then the whole quire hold their hips, and laugh; 5 5

And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear

A merrier hour was never wasted there.

But room, *good* fairy! here comes Oberon.

*Fai.* And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers.*

*Obe.* Ill met by moon-light, proud Titania.

60

58. *room*] *make room* Pope, *room now* Dyce (ed. 2), *roomer* Nicholson conj. (Notes and Queries, 1864); *good fairy*] Editor, *fair fairy* Editor conj.; *fairy* Staunton (Johnson conj.); *room, fairy! here*] *fairy, room, for here* Seymour conj. 59.] Two lines in Ff; *he*] Qq, F 1; *we* F 2, 3, 4. 60.] Two lines in Ff. *Scene* II.] Pope. Enter . . .] Enter the King of Fairies, at one doore with his traine; and the Queene, at another with hers Qq, Ff.

present spelling" (*i.e.* *coffe* . . . *loffe* of the Qq, Ff) "I think we have," says Furness, "as Capell suggests, a phonetic attempt to reproduce the robustious laughter of boors . . . and 'loffe' should be retained in the text." However, little is to be gained by discarding the modern spelling, as it is difficult, if not impossible, to fix the exact pronunciation of "laugh" or "laughter" in Shakespeare's time. See Ellis, *Early English Pronunciation*, p. 963.

56. *neeze*] a form of "sneeze," Anglo-Saxon *niesan*. Cotgrave, "Estermer: To neeze or sneeze." Cf. 2 Kings iv. 35, where "neeced" is the original text; and Job xli. 18, "neesings."

57. *wasted*] Cf. *The Tempest*, v. i. 302, "part of it (the night) I'll waste with such discourse."

58. *good fairy*] The attempts to explain or amend this defective line have been most unsatisfactory. Johnson thought "fairy or faery was sometimes of three syllables, as often in Spenser." Dyce "inserted 'now' for the metre's

sake, which is certainly preferable to the usual modern emendation 'make room.' To print 'But room, fairy,' is too ridiculous." I quite agree with Dyce. Nicholson's "roomer," "a sea phrase," is, to say the least, fantastic; though Daniel thinks the conjecture excellent, and quotes from *The Merry Devil of Edmonion*, vol. x. Hazlitt's Dodsley, p. 253, "If the devil be among us, it's time to hoist sail and cry 'roomer.'" Furness, as usual, will have no change, considering that "the break in the line affords sufficient pause to fill up the metre." It is certain that some word has fallen out of the line, and the epithet "good," which comes nearest to the trace of the letters of "room," and also near it in sound, and was therefore more likely to escape the compositor's eye or ear, would most appropriately be applied, and with patronising effect by Oberon's own lieutenant and right-hand man to an ordinary fairy; even though the personal attendant of Titania. Cf. IV. i. 51, "Welcome, good Robin."

*Tita.* What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence;

I have forsworn his bed and company.

*Obe.* Tarry, rash wanton; am not I thy lord?

*Tita.* Then I must be thy lady: but I know

When thou hast stolen away from fairy land, 65

And in the shape of Corin sat all day,

Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love

To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,

Come from the farthest steep of India?

But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon, 70

61. *Tita.*] Tit. Capell; Qu. Qq, Ff (and elsewhere); *Fairies, skip*] Theobald; *Fairy skip* Qq, Ff. (*skippe* Q 1); *Fairies, keep* Harness conj.; *Fairies, trip* Dyce conj. 65. *hast*] *wast* Ff. 69. *steep*] *steppe* Q 1; *steppe* Q 2, Ff.

61. *Fairies, skip*] Theobald's change from the "Fairy, skip" of the Folio; a change which has been adopted by nearly all editors. Capell, however, defends the Folio reading on the ground that the fairy there addressed is Titania's "leading fairy, her gentleman usher, whose moving-off would be a signal for all the rest of the train." The reading "fairy" probably took its rise in the elision of the final syllable of the plural before the consonant—in this case the same consonant—in the next word. This is a very frequent source of error.

66, 68. *Corin, Phillida*] Perhaps Shakespeare obtained these pastoral names from the English pastoral which appeared in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557, with the title "Harpalus' Complaint of Phillida's Love bestowed on Corin that loved her not, and denied him that loved her."

67. *pipes of corn*] The Vergilian "avena." Ritson quotes Chaucer's *House of Fame*, iii. 133 (ed. Morris):

"Many flowte and lilyng horne  
And pipes made of grené corne."

Cf. "when shepherds pipe on oaten straws," *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 913.

67. *versing love*] For the intransitive sense, see Sir P. Sidney, *Apol. for Poetrie* (ed. Arber, p. 29), "It is not riming and versing that maketh a Poet," etc. Craig refers to Milton's *Reason of Church-Government* (Prose Works, vol. i. p. 62, ed. 1753), "mine own choice in English, or other tongue, prosing or versing."

69. *steep*] So Q 2 and Ff. "Steppe," the reading of Q 1, has not met with general acceptance, on the ground that the word was not known in Shakespeare's day, or at least used in the sense of a vast plain, and this is also Dr. Murray's view. The idea in Shakespeare's mind was perhaps that of a lofty and precipitous range of mountains forming the extreme eastern boundary of India; and if this be so, "steep" is undoubtedly preferable. The Globe edition and the Cambridge editors read "steppe." Cf. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, i. 116 (Bullen), "From steep pine bearing mountains to the plain." Milton apparently preferred "steep." See *Comus*, 139:

"Ere the blabbing Eastern scout,  
The nice Morn, on the Indian  
steep  
From her cabined loophole peep."

Your buskin'd mistress, and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded; and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

*Obe.* How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,

Glance at my credit with Hippolyta, 75  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering  
night

From Perigouna, whom he ravished?

And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,

With Ariadne, and Antiopa? 80

*Tita.* These are the forgeries of jealousy:

77. *through the glimmering]* *glimmering through the* Warburton. 78. *Peri-*  
*goouna]* North's *Plutarch*, Grant White; *Perigenia* F 1; *Perigune* Pope (ed. 2)  
(Theobald); *Perigyné* Hamner. 79. *Aegles]* *Eagles* Qq, Ff; *Aegle* Rowe.  
80. *Antiopa]* *Atiopa* F 1.

75. *Glance at]* hint at, indirectly at-  
tack, Wright. Cf. *Comedy of Errors*,  
v. i. 66, "In company I often glanced  
at it"; and *Julius Cæsar*, i. ii. 323,  
"wherein obscurely Cæsar's ambition  
shall be glanced at."

77. *glimmering]* Cf. *Macbeth*, iii.  
iii. 5, "The west yet glimmers with  
some streaks of day."

78. *Perigouna]* "This Sinnis had a  
goodly faire daughter called Perigouna,  
which fled away when she saw her  
father slaine. . . . But Theseus finding  
her, called her, and sware by his faith  
he would use her gently, and do her no  
hurt, nor displeasure at all." North's  
*Plutarch*, ed. 2 (1595), p. 3. I see  
no reason for departing from the  
spelling of Plutarch. Shakespeare had  
nothing to gain, either in rhythm or  
otherwise, by altering the spelling.

79. *Aegles]* "For some say that  
Ariadne hung herself for sorrow, when  
she saw that Theseus had cast her off.  
Others write, that she was transported  
by mariners into the Ile of Naxos,  
where she was married unto Cénarus,

the priest of Bacchus; and they thinke  
that Theseus left her, because he was  
in love with another, as by these verses  
should appeare:

'Aegles, the Nymph, was loved of  
Theseus,  
Who was the daughter of Pano-  
peus."

North's *Plutarch*, ed. 2 (1595), p. 10.

80. *Antiopa]* "Philochorus, and  
some other holde opinion, that [The-  
seus] went thither with Hercules  
against the Amazones; and that to  
honor his valiantnes Hercules gave  
him Antiopa the Amazone. . . . Bion  
. . . saith that he brought her away  
by deceit and stealth, . . . and that  
Theseus enticed her to come into his  
ship, who brought him a present; and  
so soon as she was aboard, he hoysed his  
sail, and so carried her away." North's  
*Plutarch*, ed. 2 (1595), p. 14.

81-117.] See Introduction. A brief  
analysis of Titania's description of the  
"distemperature" of the seasons may  
enable the reader to understand the  
connection of ideas in the passage and

And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
 Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,  
 By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,  
 Or in the beached margent of the sea, 85

82. *the*] *that* Hanmer (Warburton). 85. *in*] *on* Pope.

the true sense of some of the expressions. By way of introduction we have (lines 81-87) the cause of the "progeny of evils" (115), viz. the debate and dissension of Oberon and his queen, and the "brawls with which he has disturbed her sport" (87). As pointed out by Malone, the succession of "therefores" in lines 88, 93, 103, all point to the quarrel as the cause of the elemental and planetary disturbances. (1) 88-92: "*therefore* the winds . . . overborne their continents," i.e. the revenge of the winds has caused even petty rivers to overflow their banks. (2) 93-102: "*therefore* the ox . . . hymn or carol blest," i.e. owing to the floods the fruits of agriculture are lost, the flocks are drowned, summer sports are spoilt, poor weak mortals in a wintry summer lack the good cheer usual in winter; and (the season being summer) there are no hymns or carols, which are incidental to a true and seasonable winter. (3) 103-105: "*therefore* the moon . . . diseases do abound," i.e. the moon, angry at our brawls, has made the air damp, moist, and unwholesome, which has caused numerous diseases of the respiratory organs. (Finally) 106-117: owing to our quarrel (or to this disturbance of the elements), the seasons all over the earth are altered and turned topsyturvy, and their aspects are completely changed,—all through our dissensions. 101-114 Johnson proposed to arrange in the following order: 101, 107-114, 102-104, 106, 105. 105, 106 are transposed by Hudson, from the conjecture of Johnson. These proposals display ingenuity, but are entirely inadmissible. There is no valid reason for any rearrangement.

81. *forgeries*] inventions. Cf. *Ham-*

*let*, iv. vii. 90, "in forgery of shapes and tricks."

82. *middle summer's spring*] Steevens is right in thinking that this expression means the beginning of "middle" or "mid" summer. "When trees put forth their second, or, as they are frequently called, their *midsummer* shoote." Henley. For spring in the sense of "beginning," see *Henry IV.* iv. iv. 35, "the spring of day"; and cf. *Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 3, "Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot." Chambers says the nearest parallel to the phrase is in Churchyard's *Charitie*, 1595, where "a summer spring" apparently stands for "the beginning of summer."

84. *paved fountain*] Henley explains (perhaps rightly) as fountains whose beds were covered with pebbles, in opposition to those of the rushy brooks, which are oozy.

85. *in*] within (Halliwell). "In" was often used for "on" (Dyce). Cf. "falling in the land," 90, *infra*; and "gold strewed i' the floor," *Cymbeline*, III. vi. 50. Dyce, however, quotes an observation of W. N. Lettsom to the effect that printers confound these prepositions, as, e.g., *Richard III.* v. i. 24, "to turn their own points in their masters' bosoms," where the Ff have "in" and the Qq "on."

85. *beached margent*] "formed by a beach, or which serves as a beach," Wright. Cf. *Timon*, v. i. 219, "upon the beached verge of the salt flood." "Margent" is an old form of "margin," which latter Shakespeare apparently never uses. Craig says that in the south of England pebbles for walks are called "beach"; and takes the expression to mean the margin strewn with beach, i.e. pebbles.



To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our  
sport.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land, 90  
Hath every pelting river made so proud,  
That they have overborne their continents:  
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green  
corn

Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard: 95  
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;  
The nine-men's morris is fill'd up with mud;

91. *Hath*] Qq, Ff; *Have* Rowe (ed. 2); *pelting*] Qq, *petty* Ff. 95. *h's*] *its* Pope. 97. *murrion*] *murrain* Theobald (ed. 2).

86. *ringlets*] Probably the fairies' tiny dances in a ring; scarcely the "gossamer ringlets" of Furness, or the "orbs" (9, *ante*) of Wright. Cf. "then maids dance in a ring" of T. Nash's (1569-1601?) *Song of Spring*.

87. *brawls*] noisy quarrels. Originally, a brawl was a kind of French dance, resembling a cotillon, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, III. i. 9, "will you win your love with a French braule?" Its character appears from Cotgrave: "Bransle: a brawle or daunce wherein many (men and women) holding by the hands, sometimes in a ring and otherwhiles at length, move together." It is difficult to say whether there is any etymological connection between these two words. "Brawl," meaning noisy quarrel, may be connected with the Old Eng. *brawl*, *brall*, Dan. *bralle*, to talk much and noisily—perhaps an onomatopœic word.

89, 90. *suck'd up . . . fogs*] Cf. *King Lear*, II. iv. 169, "you fen-suck'd fogs drawn by the powerful sun"; and *Tempest*, II. ii. 1, "All the infectious that the sun sucks up From bogs, fens, flats."

92. *they*] "The plural follows loosely, as representing the collection of individual rivers." Wright.

92. *continents*] banks. Cf. *King Lear*, III. ii. 58, "close pent up guilts Rive your concealing continents"; and *Hamlet*, IV. iv. 64, "tomb enough and continent to hide the slain."

97. *murrion*] Exodus ix. 3. For the variety of the spelling Wright quotes *King Lear*, I. i. 65, "champions" and "champions."

98. *nine-men's morris*] "This game was sometimes called the *nine morris merrils*, from *meralles* or *mercaux*, an ancient French word for the jettons or counters with which it was played.

And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,  
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable: 100

99. *in*] on Collier.

The other term *morris* is probably a corruption suggested by the sort of *dance* which in the progress of the game the counters performed. In the French *merelles* each party had three counters only, which were to be placed in a line in order to win the game. It appears to have been the *Tremere* mentioned in an old fabliau. See *Le Grand, Fabliaux et Contes*, ii. 208. Dr. Hyde thinks the *morris* or *merrils* was known during the time that the Normans continued in possession of England, and that the name was afterwards corrupted into *three mens morals*, or *nine mens morals*. If this be true, the conversion of *morals* into *morris*, a term so very familiar to the country people, was extremely natural. The doctor adds, that it was likewise called *nine-penny*, or *nine-pin miracle*, *three-penny morris*, *five-penny morris*, *nine-penny morris*, or *three-pin*, *five-pin*, and *nine-pin morris*, all corruptions of *three-pin*, etc. *merels*. Hyde, *Hist. Nerdiludii*, p. 202." Douce, *Illustrations of Shakespeare, etc.*, 1807. "In that part of Warwickshire where Shakespeare was educated, and the neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire, the shepherds and other boys dig up the turf with their knives to represent a sort of imperfect chess-board. It consists of a square, sometimes only a foot diameter, sometimes three or four yards. Within this is another square, every side of which is parallel to the external square; and these squares are joined by lines drawn from each corner of both squares, and the middle of each line. One party, or player, has wooden pegs, the other stones, which they move in such a manner as to take up each other's men, as they are called, and the area of the inner square is called the pound, in which the men taken up

are impounded. These figures are by the country people called *Nine Men's Morris* or *Merrils*; and are so called because each party has nine men. These figures are always cut upon the green turf, or leys as they are called, or upon the grass at the end of ploughed lands, and in rainy seasons never fail to be *choked [fill'd] up with mud*." James. "*Nine men's morris* is a game still played by the shepherds, cowkeepers, etc., in the midland counties, as follows: A figure is made on the ground (like this which I have drawn) by cutting out the turf; and two persons take each nine stones, which they place by turns in the angles, and afterwards move alternately, as at chess or draughts. He who can place three in a straight line may then take off any one of his adversary's, where he pleases, till one, having lost all his men, loses the game." Alchorne. Cotgrave gives s.v. "*Merelles*, The boyish game called *Merills* or *five-pennie Morris*; played here most commonly with stones, but in France with pawns, or men made of purpose, and teamed *Merelles*." See also Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 279 (ed. 2), and Nares, *Glossary*.

99. *the quaint mazes*] "Several mazes of the kind here alluded to are still preserved, having been kept up from time immemorial. On the top of Catherine-hill, Winchester, the usual play-place of the School, observes Percy, was a very perplexed and winding path running in a very small space over a great deal of ground, called a *Miz-Maze*. The senior boys obliged the juniors to tread it, to prevent the figure from being lost, and I believe it is still retained." Halliwell, 1856.

The human mortals want their winter cheer;  
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:

101. *want . . . cheer*] *want*; . . . *here* Knight (Anon. conj.); *chant*— . . . *here* Grant White conj.; *wail* . . . *here*; Kinnear conj.; *winter cheer*] Hanmer; *winter heere* Qq, F 1, 2; *winter here* F 3, 4; *winter cheer* Theobald conj. (withdrawn); *winters heried* Warburton; *wonted year* Johnson conj.; *summer here* Keightley conj.; *minstrelsy* Hudson.

101. *The human mortals*] It is clear from Titania's reference to the mother of her "changeling," 135, *post*, "she being mortal of that boy did die"; from the First Fairy's address to Bottom, III. i. 178, "Hail, mortal!" Puck's "these mortals" in III. ii. 115, and other passages, that the fairies distinctly considered themselves to be immortal, or at any rate superior to the ills of humanity. Steevens, however, asserted that "fairies were not 'human,' but they were yet 'subject to mortality,' and that 'human' might have been here employed to mark the difference between men and fairies." Ritson, in his *Quip Modest* (1788), rightly maintains against Steevens that the fairies of Shakespeare and the common people were immortal, and were never considered otherwise. This, however, does not explain the true meaning of "human" in this passage, used as a qualifying epithet. I think the qualification has no special reference to the immortality of the fairies as distinguished from the mortality of human beings. Read in the light of the context, it is simply a *compassionate* epithet on Titania's part, and indicates her pity for mortals who are only "human," *i.e.* who are subject to the ills and weaknesses of humanity, and who, owing to her quarrel with Oberon, are, undeservedly, without their usual seasonable "cheer," in an unseasonable time; not being, like Titania and her elemental fairy beings, creatures independent of all "human" ills and their compensating comforts.

101. *want their winter cheer*] So I read, following Theobald's conjecture and Hanmer's reading. Theobald

says: "I once suspected it should be 'want their winter cheer,' *i.e.* their jollity, usual merry-makings at that season." Capell explains (*Notes*, ii. 104): "That is, their accustomed winter in a country thus afflicted; to wit, a winter enlivened with mirth and distinguished with grateful hymns to their deities." Hudson thinks the next line naturally points out "minstrelsy" as the right correction—a "correction" which is clearly inadmissible. Dyce (ed. 2) says, "'Heere' is proved to be nonsense by the attempts to explain it"; and with this remark I entirely agree. Furness, supporting, as usual, the text of the Folio, thinks the line scarcely needs emendation, and the only solution he can find is to take "here," not in the sense of time, but of place, and he refers to Capell's explanation, above noted, in support of this. I think the true meaning is simply that "mortals" lack the cheer incidental to the real winter season, which of course would be lacking in a summer season, however wintry in its character. Hudson truly remarks that the word "here" in this place gives a sense, if any, out of harmony with the context. Not another word in the whole passage indicates that the effects of the quarrel are other than prevailing over the *whole* earth, and not at all confined to any particular spot: it is "the mazed world" (113), and not merely any particular part, which is the scene of the universal disturbance; and hence the word "here" is without meaning and quite inadmissible.

102. *hymn- or carol*] *i.e.* of the Christmas or winter season, without any reference to the "faint hymns" of Act I. i. 73, "chanted to the cold

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
 That rheumatic diseases do abound: 105  
 And thorough this distemperature we see  
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;  
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown,

106. *thorough*] Q 1, F 2, 3; *through* Q 2, F 1, 4. 107. *hoary*] Q 1, F 3, 4;  
*hoared* Q 2, F 1, 2. 109. *thin*] Halliwell (Tyrwhitt conj.); *chinne* Qq, F 1, 2;  
*chinn* F 3, 4; *chill* Theobald conj.

fruitless moon." The collocation of "moon" in the next line, which introduces a fresh deduction or result from the quarrel, is, I think, accidental, but this is by no means certain.

103. *the moon, the governess of floods*] Cf. "the watery moon," 162, *post*; *Hamlet*, I. i. 119:

"the moist star  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's  
 empire stands";

*Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 426:

"you may as well

Forbid the sea for to obey the moon";  
 and *The Tempest*, v. i. 270, "That  
 could control the moon, make flows  
 and ebbs."

105. *rheumatic*] with the accent on the first syllable, as in *Venus and Adonis*, 135. Malone says that "rheumatic diseases" signified in Shakespeare's time, not what we now call rheumatism, but distillations from the head, catarrhs, etc. Dyce, however, defines the word as "splenetic, humoursome, peevish," referring to 2 *Henry IV.* II. iv. 62, "as rheumatic as two dry toasts" ("which cannot meet but they grate one another," Johnson). In Holland's *Pliny*, xix. c. 23, we find: "And these are supposed to be singular for those fluxes and catarrhes which take a course to the belly and breed fluxes, called by the Greeks *Rheumatism*."

106. *distemperature*] It is possible that this refers proximately to the

washing of the air by the moon or the perturbation of the elements (Steevens); but Malone, followed by Wright, refers it to the "brawl" between Oberon and Titania; and I think this latter view is to be preferred. Cf. *Comedy of Errors*, v. i. 81:

"And at her heels a huge infectious  
 troop  
 Of pale distempers and foes  
 to life";

and *Romeo and Juliet*, II. iii. 4, "Thou art uproused by some distemperature." Cf. also *Pericles*, v. i. 27, "Upon what ground is his distemperature?" On the other hand, in 1 *Henry IV.* v. i. 3 (referring to the sun), "the day looks pale at his distemperature," the word most probably refers to physical disturbance. The word originally meant—(1) a condition of the air or elements not properly tempered for human health and comfort; (2) a disordered or distempered condition of the body; (3) disturbance of mind or temper.

109. *thin and icy crown*] Theobald, whose instinct was seldom at fault, first suggested "chill" for the "chinne" of the Qq, F 1, 2, and I think rightly; but Tyrwhitt's extremely plausible emendation "thin," *i.e.* "thin-haired," has been almost universally adopted by editors. Cf. the "thin and hairless scalp" of *Richard II.* III. ii. 112. On the other hand, Golding's *Ovid* (Book II. f. 17,

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds 110

Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,

The chiding autumn, angry winter, change

Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,

By their increase, now knows not which is which

And this same progeny of evils comes 115

From our debate, from our dissension;

We are their parents and original.

*Obe.* Do you amend it then; it lies in you:

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling boy, 120

To be my henchman.

*Tita.* Set your heart at rest,

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a votaress of my order:

And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,

Full often hath she gossip'd by my side; 125

And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,

112. *chiding*] *chiding* Pope. 113. *mazed*] *amazed* Rowe. 114. *increase*] *inverse* Hanmer, *inchase* Warburton. 115. *evils comes*] F 2, 3; *evils, comes* Qq, F 1; *evil comes* F 4. 122. *The fairy*] *Thy fairy* Collier (ed. 2). 123. *votaress*] *votresse* Qq, Ff.

ed. 1587), a favourite book of Shakespeare's, contains a description of winter with his "snowie frozen crown." The double epithet, therefore, of "chill and icy" is not out of place or merely tautological; and I think the *ductus literarum* rather supports the reading "chill." The point of the epithets seems to lie rather in the coldness of old Hiems' scalp than in its want of covering.

112. *chiding*] 1. That which bears a child, pregnant: "The chiding or bearing woman," Foxe, *A. & M.* (1596), 106, l. 2. "Fertile," "fruitful"; *frugifer autumnus*, Steevens, Dyce. Knight quotes

"The 'teeming autumn' big with rich increase,  
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,"

of the 97th *Sonnet*. See the *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v., for citations in support of these meanings.

113. *mazed*] confused, bewildered.

114. *increase*] the natural products of each season; see 110, *ante*.

115. *progeny of evils*] See Introduction on the Date of Composition.

121. *henchman*] Sherwood's *Fr.-Eng. Dict.*, appended to Cotgrave, gives: "A hench-man, or hench-boy. Page d'honneur, qui marche devant quelque Seigneur de grand authorité."

Marking the embarked traders on the flood;  
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,  
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait, 130  
 Following,—her womb then rich with my young  
 squire,—

Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die; 135  
 And for her sake do I rear up her boy:  
 And for her sake I will not part with him.

*Obe.* How long within this wood intend you stay?

*Tita.* Perchance, till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
 If you will patiently dance in our round, 140  
 And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

*Obe.* Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

*Tita.* Not for thy fairy kingdom.—Fairies, away

127. *on*] Qq, F 1, 2; of F 3, 4. 130. *gait*] Capell; *gate* Qq, Ff. 131.  
*Following,—her . . . squire,—*] *Following (her wombe . . . squire)* Qq, Ff;  
*Follying (her . . . squire)* Theobald (Warburton); (*Following . . . squire*)  
 Steevens, Kenrick conj.; *Having her womb . . . Cartwright conj.* 136. *do*  
*I] doe I Q 1, I do Ff.* 144. *fairy*] omitted Steevens, 1793 (Farmer conj.);  
*Fairies] Elves* Pope.

130. *swimming*] perhaps refers to a gliding motion on the water, but more probably to a graceful motion in dancing. There are numerous references in the old dramatists to a step called the swim. See Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, II. i.

131. *Following*] It is surprising to find Theobald and Hammer following Warburton in his fantastic reading "follying," meaning "wantoning in sport and gaiety." "Kenrick's re-

pulsive punctuation" (Furness) removes the excellent parentheses of the Folio, and puts a comma after "womb"; and many good editors adopt this.

140. *round*] what is now called the country-dance. Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I. vi. 7:

"A troupe of Faunes and Satyres  
 far away,  
 Within the wood were dauncing in  
 a rownd."

144. *fairy*] Cf. 58, *anto*.

48 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM [ACT II.

We shall chide downright, if I longer stay. 145

[Exit Titania with her train.

Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove,  
Till I torment thee for this injury.

My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, 150  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song;  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not, 155  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took

145. [Exit] Exeunt Qq, Ff; Exeunt Queen and her Train Theobald. 149.  
once I] Qq, F 1; I F 2, 3, 4; that I Rowe. 155. saw] Q 1; say Q 2, Ff.  
157. all arm'd] alarm'd Theobald (Warburton).

147. injury] here "insult." Cf. injurious Hermia, "insulting," III. ii. 195.

148-168.] According to Rowe, the allusions in this celebrated passage amount to no more than a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. In his *Life of Shakespear* (1709), p. 8, Rowe says that "Queen Elizabeth had several of [Shakespear's] plays acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour. It is that maiden Princess, plainly, whom he intends by a 'fair vestal throned by the west'; and that whole passage is a compliment very properly brought in and very handsomely applied to her." The historical, or supposed historical, allusions are considered in the Introduction.

149. Since] when. Cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, Ind. i. 84, and *Winter's Tale*, v. i. 219. Verity, perhaps rightly,

thinks "since" is used by Shakespeare as equivalent to "when" only after verbs denoting recollection.

151. breath] i.e. the singing voice. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. iii. 22, "so sweet a breath to sing"; *Venus and Adonis*, 429, "Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong"; and *Lucrece*, 1411, "As if some mermaid did their ears entice."

153. certain] Here used of an indefinite number, as in *The Tempest*, v. i. 53, "Bury it certain fathoms in the earth." Wright, Schmidt, *Lexicon*, quotes *Lucrece*, 1525, "And little stars shot from their fixed places." The meaning of "fixed," "sure," appears to be preferable in this passage, especially as we have "certain" occurring in the latter sense in "a certain aim," 157, *infra*.

157. all arm'd] "all" here is merely emphatic—"not in full armour, but

At a fair vestal, throned by the west;  
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts: 160  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;  
 And the imperial votaress passed on,  
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell: 165  
 It fell upon a little western flower,  
 Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
 Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:  
 The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid, 170  
 Will make or man or woman madly dote

158. *the*] Ff, omitted Qq. 160. *should*] *would* F 4. 162. *Quench'd*] *Quench* F 3, 4. 163. *votaress*] *votesse* Qq, Ff. 169. *shew'd*] *shewed* Q 1.

with all his usual weapons" (Wright), i.e. of bow and quiver. "The perverse and ingenious Warburton" reads "alarm'd," on the supposition that the beauty of the passage would be heightened if Cupid were represented as frightened at Queen Elizabeth's declaration for a single life. The marvel is that this perversity seems to have been approved by Theobald.

158. *by*] here used in a sense approaching its original meaning of "near."

159. *loosed*] the technical term in archery for the delivery of an arrow. See Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, p. 145. "Th' Archer's terme, who is not said to finish the feate of his shot before he give the loose, and deliver his arrow from his bow."

159. *smartly*] i.e. sharp and hard. See Rushton's admirable little volume, *Shakespeare an Archer*, 1897, p. 47.

163. *votaress*] 123, *arts*.

167. *Before milk-white*] Unless the fancy is Shakespeare's own, it is quite possible, as Hunter (i. 293) thinks, that

the change of the pansy from white to purple was suggested by the change of the mulberry in Ovid's *Story of Pyramus*. Shakespeare was a close student of Ovid.

168. *love-in-idleness*] The *viola tricolor*, more commonly called pansy or heartsease, and many other names. Gerard, in his *Herbal* (1577), p. 785, says it is called "in English Hartsease, Pansies, *Live in Idleness*, Cull me to you, and three faces in a hood." Lyte, in his *Nieuvve Herball* (1578), part ii. ch. ii., *Of Pances or Hartes Ease*, says, p. 149: "This floure is called . . . in Latine . . . *viola tricolor*, *Herba Trinitatis*, *Jacea*, and *Herba Clauellata*: in English Pances, Loue in idleness and Heartes Ease." Ellacombe, *Plant Lore and Garden Craft of Shakespeare*, 1878, p. 151, has added from Dr. Prior more common names, such as "Herb Trinity, Fancy, Kiss me, Cull me or cuddle me to you, Tickle my fancy, Kiss me ere I rise, Jump up and kiss me, Kiss me at the garden gate, Pink of my John," etc.



Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb: and be thou here again,  
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

*Puck.* I'll put a girdle round about the earth 175  
In forty minutes. [Exit.

*Obe.* Having once this juice,  
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes:  
The next thing then she waking looks upon,  
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, 180  
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,  
She shall pursue it with the soul of love.  
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
As I can take it with another herb,  
I'll make her render up her page to me. 185

175, 176.] *I'll . . . minutes*] as in Pope; one line in Qq; prose in Ff. 175.  
*I'll*] *I'd* Collier, *I'd* Hudson; *round*] Q 1; omitted Q 2, Ff. 177. *when*]  
*whence* Q 2. 179. *then*] Q 1; *when* Q 2, Ff; *which* Rowe. 181. *On*  
*meddling*] or *medling* Rowe. 183. *from off*] *from of* Q 1; *off from* Q 2, Ff.

174. *leviathan*] "The margins of the bibles in Shakespeare's day explained leviathan as a whale." Wright.

175. *girdle*] Cf. George Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*, 1607, I. i.:

"In tall ships richly built and ribbed with brass,  
To put a girdle round about the world."

"This metaphor is not peculiar to Shakespeare. The idea and expression were probably derived from the old plans of the world, in which the Zodiac is represented as 'a girdle round about the earth.'" Halliwell. Staunton says the phrase seems to have been a proverbial mode of expressing a voyage round the world, and quotes Shirley's *Humorous Courtier*, I. i.: "Thou hast been a traveller and convers'd With the Antipodes, almost put a girdle About the world."

176. *forty*] used very frequently as an indefinite number, which probably took its rise from scriptural sources. Cf. the forty days and forty nights of the Deluge, the wanderings of the Israelites for forty years, etc. And *Sonnets*, ii., "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow" (though the usage here is not perhaps indefinite), and *Coriolanus*, III. i. 243, "I could beat forty of them." Forty pence was a customary amount for a wager. Cf. *Henry VIII.* II. iii. 89, "How tastes it? is it bitter? forty pence, no." Cf. "Forty winks," a short nap.

178. *drop the liquor*] See the Introduction; and cf. "streak" and "anoint," 257 and 261; "latch'd," III. ii. 36; and "crush this herb," III. ii. 366, *post*.

But who comes here? I am invisible;  
And I will over-hear their conference.

*Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.*

*Dem.* I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?

The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. 190

Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood;

And here am I, and wood within this wood,

Because I cannot meet my Hermia.

Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

*Hel.* You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant; 195

188. *Scene III.*] Pope. 190. *slay . . . slayeth*] Theobald (Thirlby conj.);  
*stay . . . stayeth* Qq, Ff. 191. *unto*] Qq, *into* Ff. 192. *wood . . . wood*]  
Q 2, Ff; *wodde, . . . wood* Q 1; *wode . . . wood* Hanmer. 193. *my*] *with*  
Malone. 194. *thee*] *the* Q 1.

186. *I am invisible*] "As Oberon and Puck may be frequently observed to speak when there is no mention of their entering, they are designed by the poet to be supposed on the stage during the greatest part of the remainder of the play, and to mix, as they please, as spirits, with the other actors, without being seen or heard, but when to their own purpose." Theobald. Collier (ed. 2) says: "Among the 'properties' enumerated in Menslowe's *Diary* is 'a robe for to go invisible.' Possibly Oberon wore, or put on, such a robe, by which it was understood that he was not to be seen."

190. *slay . . . slayeth*] Thirlby's excellent emendation, adopted by Theobald and almost all subsequent editors, for the "stay" and "stayeth" of the Qq and Ff. For the word itself, cf. the song in *Twelfth Night*, II. iv. 55, "I am slain by a cruel fair maid"; and for the sanguinary designs of Demetrius with regard to Lysander, see III. ii. 64, where he says to Hermia, "I had

rather give his carcase to my hounds"; cf. also III. ii. 257.

192. *wood . . . wood*] a play upon words, of a sort, as is indicated by the reading of Q 2 and the Ff; "wood" meaning mad, enraged; Anglo-Saxon *wod*, mad, and German *wuth*, rage. The difference in meaning is perhaps more clearly shown by the spelling "wode" adopted by Hanmer, Capell, and the Cambridge editors, though it is doubtful whether there was any distinction in pronunciation. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 740, "Life poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood." See also Chaucer's *C.T.*, Prologue, 184 (of the Monk), "what sholde he studie and make hym-selven wood"; and 636 (of the Somonour), "Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood."

195. *adamant*] formerly identified with the magnet or loadstone, and originally a name for the hardest metal, probably "steel"; being used in Latin poetically for the hardest iron or steel, or anything very hard and indestruct-

But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,  
And I shall have no power to follow you.

*Dem.* Do I entice you? Do I speak you fair?

Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth 200

Tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you?

*Hel.* And even for that do I love you the more.

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:

Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, 205

196. *for*] *though* Lettsom conj. 197. *you*] omitted F 3, 4. 201. *nor*] Ff,  
*not* Qq, and Pope. 202. *you*] Q 1; *thee* Q 2, Ff.

ible; also, in Pliny, the name of a transparent crystalline gem, probably white sapphire; and at length transferred to the still harder "diamond"; which name is a modern corruption of adamant, through the French *diamant*. Craig remarks: "Shakespeare may have used the word in the sense of loadstone, with a play on the other sense of adamant, *i.e.* what Burns would call 'hard whun-rock'; or else he may use it in the sense of a hard rock which draws to it ships to their destruction"; and he refers to Lord Berners's translation of *Huon of Burdeaux*, ca. cviii. E.E. Text Soc., ed. Sidney Lee (1883), p. 369: "for yf god had not had petye of them they were all lykely to haue ben lost for the plase that they sawe a farre of was a castell, and therein cloyd the rock of the Adamant: the which castell was daungerous to aproche for yf enye shyppe come nere it, and haue any Iron nayles within it, and a shyppe come within the syght thereof, the Adamant wyll drawe the shyppe to hym." See also Edward Fenton's *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*, 1569: "There is now a dayes a kind of adamant which draweth unto it fleshe, and the same so strongly, that it hath power to knit and tie together two

mouthes of contrary persons and drawe the heart of a man out of his bodie without offending any part of him."

196, 197. *But yet . . . steel*] "There is no need of change if we take 'draw not' in the sense of the opposite of drawing, namely, of repulsion, which is not logical, it must be granted, but then Helena was not logical; 'you are,' she says in effect, 'adamant only as far as I am concerned; you repel iron, as is shown by your repelling my heart, which is true steel'; or there may have been the image in Helena's mind of a piece of lodestone, such as all of us have often seen, encrusted with bits of iron, which have been drawn to it, and she says to Demetrius, in effect, 'You do not draw iron, because, if you did, my heart, which is the truest steel, would be close to your heart, and I should be folded in your arms.'" Furness. "In drawing (attracting) my heart you draw that which for its trueness is very steel." Verity. "The point seems to be, 'you draw my heart as adamant draws iron; yet, though my heart be true as steel, it is not in other respects like iron, *i.e.* it is not hard.'" Chambers.

203. *spaniel*] Ct. *Julius Caesar*, III. I. 43, "base spaniel fawning."

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

What worser place can I beg in your love  
(And yet a place of high respect with me)

Than to be used as you use your dog? 210

*Dem.* Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;  
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

*Hel.* And I am sick when I look not on you.

*Dem.* You do impeach your modesty too much,  
To leave the city, and commit yourself 215  
Into the hands of one that loves you not;  
To trust the opportunity of night,  
And the ill counsel of a desert place,  
With the rich worth of your virginity.

*Hel.* Your virtue is my privilege for that. 220  
It is not night when I do see your face,  
Therefore I think I am not in the night;  
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,  
For you, in my respect, are all the world:  
Then how can it be said I am alone, 225  
When all the world is here to look on me?

206. *lose*] *loose* Q 1. 210. *use*] *Qq*, *doe* Ff, *do use* Reed; *dog*] *dogge* Q 1,  
F 1; *dog*. Q 2. 220. *privilege for that*.] Malone (Tyrwhitt conj.), *privilege*:  
*for that it is* Qq, Ff.

220. *privilege for that* "Tyrwhitt's punctuation, which makes 'that' refer to Helena's leaving the city, has been adopted by all the best editors down to Staunton, who returned to the punctuation of the Qq, Ff. Staunton has a respectable following in the Cambridge editors." Furness. I think, however, that "that" refers simply to "virginity," and not so much to her leaving the city. The reproaches of Demetrius refer specifically to—(1) "the opportunity of

night," (2) "a desert place," (3) her "virginity." Helena's replies were equally specific, though in the inverse order: *i.e.* (3) his virtue is the guardian of her virginity, (2) it is not night when she sees his face, (1) the wood is not a desert place and lacks not company, Demetrius being all the world to her.

224. *in my respect*] *i.e.* as I regard it. Cf. *Cymbeline*, II. iii. 140, "His meanest garment . . . is dearer in my respect."

*Dem.* I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

*Hel.* The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed; 230  
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind  
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,  
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies.

*Dem.* I will not stay thy questions; let me go: 235  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

*Hel.* Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!

235. questions] question Dyce, ed. 2 (Steevens conj.). 238. Ay] Rowe:  
I Qq, Ff; the field] Q 1; and field Q 2, Ff.

231.] The story of the flight of Daphne Shakespeare found in Ovid, *Metam.* i. 452-552. See 167, ante, and Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*, p. 268.

232. griffin] Herodotus, iv. 13 and 27, mentions the wars for gold between the one-eyed people the Arimaspians and the gold-guarding griffins—'Ἀριμασπιδὸς ἄνδρας μονοφθαλμούς, ὑπὲρ δὲ τούτων τοὺς χρυσοφύλακας γρύφους. Craig refers to an entertaining account of this fabulous monster in Lord Berners's *Huon of Burdeaux* (Lee, E. Eng. Text Ed., part ii. p. 425, c. xxx.), "How Huon was borne by a gryffon out of the castell of Adamant, and how he slew the gryffon . . . Huon beheld him and sawe howe he was a crewell fowle. His becke was maruaylously grete, his eyen as great as a basyn, and more redder than the mouth of a fornays, and his talantys so great and so longe that ferful it was to beholde hym." Way (*Promptorium Parvulorum*, 1865, s.v. Grype, footnote) says: "This fabulous animal is particularly described

by Sir John Maundevile, in his account of Bacharie, 'In that contree been many griffounes, more plente than in any other contree. Sum men seyn that thei hau the body upward as an Eagle, and benethe as a lyounne, and treuly thei seyn sothe that thei ben of that schapp. But a griffoun hath the body more gret, and is more strong thanne viij lyouns, of such lyouns as ben of this half, and more gret and strongere than an c. egles, suche as we hau amonges us.'" See also *Holland's Pliny*, x. 49, "As for the foules called Pegasi, headed like horses; and the griffons, which are supposed to have long eares and a hooked bill, I take them to bee meere fables." See also the references in Phipson's *Armadillo Lore of Shakespeare's Time*, 1883, p. 460, s.v.

235. questions] Steevens thought it not impossible that Shakespeare here wrote "question," i.e. discourse, conversation. Cf. *As You Like It*, iii. iv. 39, "I met the duke yesterday, and had much question with him."

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex: 240

We cannot fight for love, as men may do;

We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[Exit Dem

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,

To die upon the hand I love so well. [Exit Hel

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove, 245

Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.—

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,

Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows; 250

242 [Exit Dem.] omitted Qq, Ff. 243. *I'll* Ille Qq, I Ff. 244. [Exit] Q 2, Ff; omitted Q 1. 246. *Scene IV.*] Pope. Re-enter Puck] Capell; Enter Pucke Qq, Ff (after line 247). 248. *there* here Hudson (Lettsom conj.). 249. *whereon*] Pope; *where* Qq, Ff. 250. *oxlips*] Q 1; *Oxslips* Q 2, Ff; *the oxslips* Rowe; *oxslip* Pope; *oxlip* Theobald; *ox-lips* . . . *violet*] *violets* . . . *ox-lip* Keightley.

242.] For the sentiment, see *Titus Andronicus*, II. i. 82, "She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd"; and *1 Henry VI.* v. iii. 77, "She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd."

244. *upon the hand*] almost equivalent to "by the hand," combined with the idea of local proximity to the object. See II. ii. 107, "to perish on my sword." "Upon" seems to mean "in consequence of" in *Much Ado*, IV. i. 225, "When he shall hear she died upon his words"; and v. i. 258, "And fled is he upon this villany."

249. *whereon*] Pope's sensible reading for the halting "where" of the Qq, Ff, which is followed by many editors. Critics there are who, like Malone, consider the word a disyllable; or, like White (ed. 1), as having "a disyllabic

quantity" (whatever that may mean); or, like Furness, fancy that "a pause before *where* takes the place of a syllable." I entirely decline to believe that Shakespeare wrote "where." If we assume the date 1594 for the composition of this play, and if we remember that *Venus and Adonis* was published the previous year, 1593, we shall discover Pope's "whereon" in line 151 of the poem: "Witness this primrose bank *whereon* I lie." No critic that I am aware of appears to have noticed this, and I think we need look no farther for the true reading.

250. *oxlips*] Cf. *Winter's Tale*, IV. iv. 125, "bold oxlips and The crown imperial." Lyte, *Nieue Herball*, 1578, p. 123: "The oxelip, or the small kinde of white Mulleyn, is very like to

Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,  
 With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine :  
 There sleeps Titania, sometime of the night,  
 Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight ;  
 And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,      255  
 Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :

251. *Quite*] omitted Pope ; *over-canopied*] *overcanopi'd* Q 1, *overcanoped* Q 2, *ouer-cannopied* Ff, *O'er-cannopy'd* Pope ; *lush*] Steevens, 1793 (Theobald conj.), *luscious* F t, *lushious* Qq. 253. *sometime*] *some time* Rowe. 254. *these flowers*] *these bowers* Grant White (Collier), *this bower* Hudson (Lettsom conj.) ; *with*] from Hanmer. 256. *wrap*] F 2, 3, 4 ; *wrappe* Q 1 ; *rap* Q 2, F 1.

the Cowslippe aforesaid, saving that his leaves be greater and larger, and his floures be of a pale or faynt yellow colour, almost white and without savour." Marshall says : "Oxlips are comparatively rare now in England, at least in a wild state."

250. *grows*] singular, probably by attraction to its nearest subject "violet."

251. *lush*] The reading of Theobald, Steevens, Dyce, and others for the "luscious" of the Folio, and the "lushious" of the Qq: the latter a very significant spelling. As Ritson neatly put it, "lush is clearly preferable in point of sense, and absolutely necessary in point of metre." Cf. *Tempest*, II. i. 52, "How lush and lusty the grass looks !" The conservative instinct of Furness prefers to adhere to the Folio reading, and to treat the line as an Alexandrine.

251. *woodbine*] Lyte, *Nievrre Herball*, p. 390 : "Woodbine or Honysuckle hath many small branches, whereby it windeth and wrappeth it selfe about trees and hedges . . . Woodbine groweth in all this Countrie in hedges, about inclosed feedles, and amongst broome or fires. It is founde also in woodes . . . This herbe, or kinde of Bindweede, is called . . . in Englishe Honysuckle, or Woodbine, and of some Caprifoyle." See IV. i. 47, *post*.

252. *musk-roses*] Gerarde, *Herbal*

(1597), 1086, says : "The musk-rose was called *Rosa moschata*, of the smell of muske ; in Italian, *Rosa moschatta* ; in French, *Roses musques*, or *musca-delles*." Gerarde describes it as being of a white colour, "with certaine yellow seedes in the middle," and says that it is of most writers reckoned among the Wilde Roses. Craig refers to Bacon's Essay, "Of Gardens," where he says : "that which, above all others, yields the *Sweetest Smell* in the Air, is the Violet, . . . Next to that is the Musk Rose." See Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*, s.v.

252. *eglantine*] the sweet-brier. Cotgrave : "Aiglantier : m. An *Eglenline*, or sweet-brier tree." Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV. ii. 223, "the leaf of eglantine." Gerarde, p. 1088, says : "The Eglantine Rose . . . a kinde of Dogs Rose . . . in English Eglantine or Sweet Brier." And see Ellacombe, *supra*. Milton's imitation of this passage is well known.

253. *sometime of the night*] a partitive genitive, with the sense of "during." Cf. *Hamlet*, I. v. 60, "my custom always of the afternoon." And see Abbott, § 176.

255, 256.] Keightley, *Expositor*, 1867, transposes these two lines, so as to follow 252, and the change has been adopted by Hudson, reading "where" for "there."

256. *Weed*] a garment.

And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,  
 And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
 Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove :  
 A sweet Athenian lady is in love 260  
 With a disdainful youth : anoint his eyes ;  
 But do it, when the next thing he espies  
 May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man  
 By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
 Effect it with some care ; that he may prove 265  
 More fond on her, than she upon her love :  
 And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.  
*Puck.* Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE II.—*Another part of the Wood.**Enter TITANIA, with her train.*

*Tita.* Come, now a roundel, and a fairy song ;  
 Then, for the third part of a minute, hence ;

257. *And*] *There* Hanmer, *Now* Lettsom conj., *Then* Keightley. 266. *fond*  
*on*] *fond* of Rowe ; *her love*] *his love* Hanmer. 268. [*Exeunt*] Qq, *Exit* ff.

*Scene II.*

*Scene II.*] Capell, *Scene v.* Pope, *Scene III.* Steevens ; Theobald continues the  
*Scene.* Another part of the Wood] Capell. Enter . . .] Enter Tityania,  
 Queen of Fairies, with her traine Q 1 ; Enter Queen of Fairies, with her traine  
 Q 2, F 1. 2. *for*] *fore* Theobald, Hudson ; *in* Heath conj. ; *ere* Hudson  
 conj. ; *by* Kinnear conj. ; *a minute*] *the midnight* Warburton.

263, 264. *man . . . on*] Shakespeare frequently rhymes a short "a" with a short "o," and probably to his ear the rhyme was reasonably correct. See this rhyme repeated in III. ii. 348, 349, and the earlier instances of "crab" and "bob" in lines 48 and 49, and "cough" and "laugh" in lines 54 and 55 of this scene. Steevens may be nearer the mark when he says : "I desire no surer evidence to prove that the broad Scotch pronunciation once prevailed in England, than such a rhyme as the first of these words affords

to the second." Wright assumes the rhymes are imperfect, and thinks it unsafe to draw any inference as to Shakespeare's pronunciation. I am inclined to think that the "o" had the sound of the "a," and not *vice versa*.

266. *fond on*] Cf. *Sonnets*, lxxxiv. 14, "being fond on praise."

*Scene II.*

1. *roundel*] Cf. "round," II. i. 40, and line 8, *infra*.

2. *the third part of a minute*] Halliwell says : "This quaint subdivision of



Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;  
 Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
 To make my small elves coats; and some keep back 5  
 The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders  
 At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;  
 Then to your offices, and let me rest.

## SONG.

*Fir. Fairy.* You spotted snakes, with double tongue,  
 Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen; 10  
 Newts, and blind-worms, do no wrong;  
 Come not near our fairy queen:

7. *spirits*] *sports* Hanmer (Warburton); *Sing*] *Come, sing* Hanmer. 9. Song.  
*Fir. Fairy*] Capell; *Fairies Sing.* Qq, Ff.

time exactly suits the character of the speaker and her diminutive world."

3. *cankers*] Formerly often the same as "cancer," meant originally a spreading sore or ulcer, then a disease of plants, especially fruit-trees, and was probably also applied to any destructive caterpillar or insect larva which destroys the buds and leaves of plants. See *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. i. 43, 46, "the eating canker"; *Romeo and Juliet*, II. iii. 30, "the canker death"; *Venus and Adonis*, 656, "This canker that eats up Love's tender spring"; and *Hamlet*, I. iii. 39, "The canker galls the infants of the spring."

4. *rere-mice*] bats. Anglo-Saxon, *hrere-mus*, from "hreran," to stir, agitate; hence "flittermouse," the old name for the bat.

6. *clamorous owl*] Cf. *Macbeth*, II. iii. 65:

"the obscure bird

Clamoured the live-long night."

8.] Capell divided the fairies' song into two stanzas of four lines each, with a chorus of six lines. The stanzas comprise the song called for by Titania, and the chorus is the "roundel" which

was at once song and dance, like that of the "Merryman and his Maid" in W. S. Gilbert's *Yeomen of the Guard*.

11. *Newts*] an ewt or eft (Anglo-Saxon, "efete"), the "n" of the indefinite article being attached in pronunciation to the following word, as in "nonce" and other words. Edward Topsell, *Historie of Four-footed Beastes*, 1608, p. 212: "Of the Nevte or Water Lizard. This is a little blacke Lizard, called Wassermoll or Wasseraddex, that is, a Lizard of the Water . . . They live in standing water or pooles, as in ditches of Townes and Hedges . . . There is nothing in nature that so much offendeth it as salt, for so soon as it is layde vpon salt, it endeaouureth with all might and maine to runne away . . . Beeing moued to anger, it standeth upon the hinder legges, and looketh directlie in the face of him that hath stirred it, and so continueth till all the body be white, through a kind of white humour or poyson, that it swelleth outward, to harme (if it were possible) the person that did prouoke it." The creatures are of course perfectly harmless, but the text expresses not only the belief of the common people, but of

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody,  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby: 15  
Never harm, nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh:  
So, good night, with lullaby.

*Fir. Fairy.* Weaving spiders, come not here;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence: 20

13, 23. Chorus] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff. 14. *in our*] Qq, *in your*  
Ff. 19. *Fir. Fairy*] 1 *Fai.* Q 1, 1 *Fairy* Q 2, 2 *Fairy* Ff. 20. *spinners*]  
Q 1, Ff; *spinders* Q 2.

the naturalists of the time. Cf. *Macbeth*, iv. i. 14, "Eye of newt and blind-worm's sting."

11. *blind-worms*] Topsell, p. 239: "Of the *Slovv-Worme*. This serpent was called in auncient time among the Grecians *Tythlops* and *Typhlines*, and *Cophia*, because of the dimnes of the sight thereof, and the deafenes of the eares and hearing . . . It beeing most euident that it receiue the name from the blindnes and deafenes thereof, for I haue often proued, that it neither heareth nor seeth here in England, or at the most it seeth no better than a Mole . . . It is harmless except being prouoked, yet many times when an oxe or a cow lieth down in the pasture, if it chauce to lie upon one of these slov-wormes, it byteth the beast, and if remedy be not had, there followeth mortality or death, for the poyson thereof is very strong."

13. *melody*] pronounced with the sound of "ei," so as to make a perfect rhyme with "lullaby." See i. i. 189, and ii. ii. 77, *poet*, where "kill-courtesy" rhymes to "lie," and 57, where "courtesy" rhymes to "modesty."

19. *spiders*] also thought to be poisonous. Cf. *Richard II.* ii. i. 14, "Thy spiders that suck up thy venom."

Lily's *Euphuës* (ed. Arber), 100: "Is not poyson taken out of the Hunny-suckle by the Spider? venym out of the Rose by the Cancker?" Topsell, p. 246: "All spyders are venomous, but yet some more, and some lesse. Of spyders that neyther doe nor can doe much harme, some of them are tame, familiar, and domesticall, and these be cōmonly the greatest among the whole packe of them. Others againe be meere wilde, liuing without the house abroade in the open ayre, which by reason of their rauēous gut, and greedy deuouring maw, haue purchased to theselues the name of wolves and hunting spyders." Craig says: "It is constantly stated in Elizabethan writers that there are no spiders in Ireland, and that if you touch a spider with a piece of Irish wood it will die."

20. *spinners*] spiders. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, i. iv. 59 (of Mab), "Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs"; and Latimer in Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, "Where the bee gathereth honey, even there the spinner gathereth venome." Craig refers to Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandrie* (Pynson, 1523, ed. Skeat, p. 51), "And also there wyll be many Kells upon the grass" [and the 1598 edition adds] "like to Spinners

Beetles black, approach not near ;  
Worm, nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody, etc.

*Sec. Fairy.* Hence, away ! now all is well :

One, aloof, stand sentinel. 25

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*]

*Enter OBERON.*

*Obe.* What thou seest, when thou dost wake,  
[*Squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.*

Do it for thy true love take ;  
Love and languish for his sake :

Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair, 30

In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear ;  
Wake, when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*

*Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.*

*Lys.* Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood  
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way : 35  
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,  
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

*Her.* Be it so, Lysander : find you out a bed ;  
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

24. *Sec. Fairy*] 2 *Fai. Qq, 1 Fairy Ff.* 25. [*Exeunt Fairies*] *Rowe ;*  
omitted *Qq, Ff ; Titania sleeps*] *Shée sleepes F 1, omitted Qq ; Enter . . .*  
*eyelids*] *Capell ; Enter Oberon Qq, Ff.* 31. *that*] *what Pope.* 33. [*Exit*]  
*Rowe ; omitted Qq, Ff.* 34. *Scene VI.] Pope ; wood*] *Q 1 ; woods Q 2, Ff.*

*webs* ; and to Chapman's *Widow's* they will wag them, so will you your  
*Tears*, iv. iii., "for women are a kind tongues." Cotgrave has : "*Araigne :*  
of spinners : if their legs be plucked of, A spider, a spinner."

*Lys.* One turf shall serve as pillow for us both; 40  
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

*Her.* Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

*Lys.* O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence! 45  
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.  
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit;  
So that but one heart we can make of it:  
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;  
So, then, two bosoms and a single troth.  
Then, by your side no bed-room me deny; 50  
For, lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

*Her.* Lysander riddles very prettily:  
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,  
If Hermia meant to say, Lysander lied.  
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy 55  
Lie further off; in human modesty

42. *good*] *god* Q 1. 44, 45. *innocence*! . . . *conference*] *conference*; . . .  
*innocence* Theobald, ed. 1 (Warburton). 45. *conference*] *confidence* Collier,  
ed. 2. 47. *we can*] Qq, *can you* Ff, *can we* Capell. 48. *interchained*] Qq,  
*interchanged* Ff. 56. *off*; *in* . . . *modesty*,] Theobald; *off*, *in* . . . *modesty*:  
Q 1; *off*, *in* . . . *modesty*, Q 2, F 1, 2; *off in* . . . *modesty*, F 3, 4.

45. *Love* . . . *conference*] *i.e.*  
"Love puts a good construction on  
all that is said and done in the 'con-  
ference' or intercourse of love." Lett-  
som (*Blackwood's Magazine*), 1853.

48. *interchained*] So Qq, and perhaps  
this reading is more forcible than the  
"interchanged" of the Ff. On the  
other hand, R. G. White (ed. 1) thinks  
that "interchained" of the Qq conveys  
the comparatively commonplace thought  
that the lovers' hearts were bound  
together; "interchanged" represents  
them, as having been given each to the  
other, as the most solemn instruments  
are made, interchangeably. One pos-  
sible objection to the reading of the Qq  
is that it does not seem to be used by

any other writer; and it will be remem-  
bered that "interchanged" is used  
before by Shakespeare in I. i. 29,  
"interchanged love tokens." Marshall  
adopts "interchained" on the ground  
that "it is more consonant in sense with  
line 46—'my heart unto yours is knit';  
and that 'bosom,' though used as 'desire'  
(*Measure for Measure*, IV. iii. 139), or as  
'inmost thoughts' (*Othello*, III. i. 58),  
seems never to be used for 'the affections'  
themselves. Shakespeare could scarcely  
have said 'we have *interchanged* bosoms.'  
The objection to 'interchained' is," Mar-  
shall further says, "not that it occurs  
only in this passage, but that it is not to  
be found in any other writer, ancient or  
modern, so far as I can discover."

Such separation as may well be said,  
 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid:  
 So far be distant; and good night, sweet friend:  
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end! 60

*Lys.* Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;  
 And then end life, when I end loyalty!  
 Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

*Her.* With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

[*They sleep.*]

*Enter PUCK.*

*Puck.* Through the forest have I gone, 65  
 But Athenian found I none,  
 On whose eyes I might approve  
 This flower's force in stirring love.  
 Night and silence!—who is here?  
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear: 70  
 This is he, my master said,  
 Despised the Athenian maid;  
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,  
 On the dank and dirty ground.  
 Pretty soul! she durst not lie 75  
 Near this lack-love kill-courtesy.

66. *found*] Q 1; *finde* Q 2, Ff. 76. *Near this lack-love kill-courtesy*] Johnson; *Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy* F 1; *Near to this lack-love, this kill-courtesy* Pope; *Near to this kill-courtesy* Theobald; *Near to th's lack-love kill-courtesy* Warburton; *Near this lack-love, kill-courtesy* Steevens (1785, 1793); *Nearer this lack-love, this kill-courtesy* Dyce (Walker conj.).

67. *approve*] Cf. "approvers," i.e. those who put to the proof, *Cymbeline*, II. iv. 25.

70. *Weeds*] See II. i. 264.

76. *Near this lack-love kill-courtesy*] This, the reading of Johnson, is the only tolerable reading. The editors almost universally appear to take "lack-love" as a substantive. I

believe it is here used as an adjective, and I think the compositor introduced the second "this" into the line from a misconception of this fact. The expression is, I think, almost exactly analogous to the "purple-hued fault-worms" of *1 Henry IV.* II. i. 83; cf. also II. iv. 77-80 of that play. The note in Furness affords, in my opinion,

Churl, upon thy eyes I throw  
 All the power this charm doth owe.  
 When thou wak'st, let love forbid  
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid. 80  
 So awake when I am gone,  
 For I must now to Oberon. [Exit.

*Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.*

*Hel.* Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.  
*Dem.* I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.  
*Hel.* O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so. 85  
*Dem.* Stay, on thy peril; I alone will go.  
 [Exit.

*Hel.* O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!  
 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.  
 Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;  
 For she hath blessed and attractive eyes. 90  
 How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:  
 If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.  
 No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;  
 For beasts that meet me, run away for fear:

83. *Scene VII.*] Pope; *Stay* Qq, F 1; *Say* F 2, 3, 4. 86. [Exit] Exit Demetrius Ff, omitted Qq.

many melancholy examples of misapplied ingenuity and defective "ear" for rhythm.

79, 80. *When . . . eyelid*] i.e. forbid sleep to retain his seat, let love banish sleep from his eyes, when he would sleep again. Cf. the well-known passage in *Macbeth*, i. iii. 19:

"Sleep shall neither night nor day  
 Hang upon his penthouse lid."

85. *darkling*] in the dark. Cf. *King Lear*, i. iv. 237, "So out went the candle, and we were left darkling"; and *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. xv. 10:

"O sun,  
 Burn the great sphere thou movest  
 in! darkling stand  
 The varying shore of the world."

87. *fond*] foolish, as often in Shakespeare.

92. *wash'd*] Cf. *Much Ado*, i. i. 27, "there are no faces truer than those that are so washed"; and *King Lear*, i. i. 269, "with wash'd eyes Cordelia leaves you." Craig quotes Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy*, i. ii. 34, "What, ha' you wash'd your eyes with tears this morning?"

Therefore, no marvel, though Demetrius 95

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?

But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!

Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound: 100

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

*Lys.* And run through fire I will, for thy sweet sake.

[*Waking.*

Transparent Helena! Nature shews her art,

That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word 105

Is that vile name, to perish on my sword!

*Hel.* Do not say so, Lysander; say not so:

What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?

Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

*Lys.* Content with Hermia! No; I do repent 110

The tedious minutes I with her have spent.

Not Hermia, but Helena I love:

Who will not change a raven for a dove?

103. *Helena*] *Helena* Pope; *Nature 'shews her*] Malone; *Nature her shewes* F 1; *Nature here shews* F 2, 3, 4. 104. *thy heart*] *my heart* Dyce, ed. 2 (Walker conj.). 112. *Helena I love*] Q 1; *Helena now I love* Q 2, Ff; *Helena now I love* Dyce, ed. 2 (Seymour conj.).

98. *sphery*] Cf. Milton's *Comus*, 1021, "Higher than the sphery chime." The meaning appears to be, "Eyes bright as the stars in their spheres."

103. *Nature shews her art*] the reading of Malone, which has been adopted by almost all modern editors. But there is much to be said in favour of the Ff reading, "Nature her [*i.e.* here] shewes art," on the ground that "art" is usually contrasted with "nature," and that the point of Lysander's remark is not otherwise preserved.

104. *thy heart*] Walker, Dyce, and Hudson read "my heart." Cf. *As You Like It*, v. iv. 120:

"That thou mightst join her hand with his  
Whose heart within her bosom is."

108. *What though*] What matter. Craig.

113. *Who . . . dove*] Craig compares *Twelfth Night*, v. i. 134, "a raven's heart within a dove."

The will of man is by his reason sway'd ;  
 And reason says you are the worthier maid. 115  
 Things growing are not ripe until their season :  
 So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason ;  
 And touching now the point of human skill,  
 Reason becomes the marshal to my will,  
 And leads me to your eyes ; where I o'erlook 120  
 Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

*Hel.* Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born ?  
 When, at your hands, did I deserve this scorn ?  
 Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,  
 That I did never, no, nor never can, 125  
 Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
 But you must flout my insufficiency ?  
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,  
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.  
 But fare you well : perforce I must confess, 130  
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.  
 O, that a lady, of one man refused,  
 Should of another therefore be abused ! [*Exit.*]

*Lys.* She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there ;  
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near ! 135  
 For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things

117. *ripe not*] *not ripe* Rowe (ed. 2).  
 ed. 2 (S. Walker conj.).

117. *ripe*] ripen, grow ripier, as in  
*As You Like It*, II. vii. 26, "And  
 so from hour to hour we ripe and  
 ripe."

118. *touching . . . skill*] Touching  
 the highest point of human discern-  
 ment.

121. *love's richest book*] Cf. *Love's  
 Labour's Lost*, IV. iii. 350:

"From women's eyes this doctrine  
 I derive :

121. *Love's stories*] *Love-stories* Dyce,

They sparkle still the right Pro-  
 methean fire ;  
 They are the books, the arts, the  
 academes,  
 That show, contain, and nourish  
 all the world " ;

and *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iii. 85 :

"And what obscured in this fair  
 volume lies,  
 Find written in the margin of his  
 eyes."



The deepest loathing to the stomach brings;

Or, as the heresies, that men do leave,

Are hated most of those they did deceive;

So thou, my surfeit, and my heresy,

I 40

Of all be hated, but the most of me!

And, all my powers, address your love and might,

To honour Helen, and to be her knight!

[Exit.

Her. [Awaking.] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best,

To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!

I 45

Ah me, for pity! what a dream was here!

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:

Methought a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.

Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!

I 50

What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?

Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;

Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.

139. *they*] Qq, *that* Ff. 149. *you*] Qq, *yet* Ff. 151. *hearing?* ~~gone?~~ Ff] Capell; *hearing, gone?* Qq, Ff; *hearing gone?* Theobald. 152. *an*] Capell; *and* Qq, Ff. 153. *swoon*] *swoone* Q 1; *swooned* Q 2, F 2, 3, 4; *sound* F 1.

148. *eat*] "ate" is the older form of the preterite, but perhaps there was no distinction in pronunciation between the present and the preterite.

153. *of all loves*] meaning, perhaps, "for the sake of all that's loving." Craig. "Of" is used in adjurations and appeals to signify "out of." Cf. *Twelfth Night*, v. i. 237, "Of charity, what kin are you to me?" And the sense of "out of" being lost, it perhaps became equivalent to "for the sake of," "by." For the phrase itself, cf. *Merry Wives*, II. ii. 118, "But Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves"; and *Othello*, III. i. 13, "he desires you, of all

loves." Here the Ff reads "for love's sake." Nares furnishes other examples, e.g., *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575), v. ii, "For all the loves on earth, Hodge, let me see it"; and Dekker's *Women's Whore* (Dodsley's Old Plays, II. 76, and iii. 267), "Conjuring his wife, of all loves, to prepare fitting cheer for such honourable trencher-men." Craig refers also to Heywood's *A Woman killed with Kindness*, II. iv. 49, "Of all the loves betwixt thee and me, tell me what thou thinkest of this?" and Bernard's *Terrence in English* (*Eunuchus*), ed. 1607, p. 119, "Of all loves, hearken to this I am telling you."

No? then I will perceive you are not nigh:  
 Either death, or you, I'll find immediately. 155  
 [Exit.]

## ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Wood. Titania lying asleep.*

*Enter* QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT,  
 and STARVELING.

*Bot.* Are we all met?

*Quin.* Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient  
 place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be  
 our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house;  
 and we will do it in action, as we will do it be- 5  
 fore the duke.

*Bot.* Peter Quince,—

*Quin.* What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

155. *Either*] Or Pope.

*Act III. Scene I.*

*Act III. Scene I.*] Rowe; Actus Tertius Ff, omitted Qq. The Wood] Pope. Titania lying asleep] The Queen of Fairies lying asleep Rowe; omitted Qq, Ff. Enter . . .] Rowe; Enter the clownes Qq, Ff. 2. *marvellous*] *maruauiles* Q 1; *maruauilous* Q 2, Ff; *maruels* Capell. 7. *Quince*,—] Theobald; *Quince*? Q 1, F 2, 3, 4; *quince*? Q 2, F 1.

155. *Either*] See II. i. 32, *ante*.

*Act III, Scene I.*

2. *marvellous*] "Capell appears to have considered the reading of Q 1 as representing the vulgar pronunciation of 'marvellous,' and he therefore printed it 'maruels' as in IV. i. 26." Cambridge edd.

4. *hawthorn brake*] See 77, *post*.

4. *tiring-house*] attiring-house, dressing room. Craig refers to Rd. Brome's *The Antipodes*, IV. iv., Works (Benson), 1873, iii. 324:

"Bar. Well Tony, I will see thee in  
 this thing,  
 And 'tis a pretty thing.

*Bla.* Prethee, good Bab,  
 Come in, and help me on with't  
 in our *Tyring-house*,  
 And helpe the gentlemen, my  
 fellow danciers,  
 And thou shalt then see all  
 our things and all  
 Our *properties* and practice to  
 the Musicke."

8. *bully*] Cf. IV. ii. 19, *post*; *The Tempest*, V. i. 238; and *Merry Wives*,

*Bot.* There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby, that will never please. First, 10  
Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself;  
which the ladies cannot abide. How answer  
you that?

*Snout.* By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

*Star.* I believe we must leave the killing out, when 15  
all is done.

*Bot.* Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.  
Write me a prologue: and let the prologue seem  
to say, we will do no harm with our swords; and  
that Pyramus is not killed indeed: and, for the 20  
more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus  
am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This  
will put them out of fear.

*Quin.* Well, we shall have such a prologue; and it  
shall be written in eight and six.— 25

14. *By'r lakin*] *Berlakin* Q 1; *Berlaken* Q 2, Ff. 17. *device*] *devisé* Q 1.  
20, 21. *the more better*] *the better* Rowe (ed. 2), *more better* Pope.

*passim.* The *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v., says: "Etymology obscure; possibly an adaptation of the Dutch *boel*, 'lover' (of either sex), also 'brother'; earlier also 'friend,' 'kinsman' . . . A term of endearment and familiarity, originally applied to either sex; sweetheart, darling. Later, to men only, implying friendly admiration; good friend, fine fellow, 'gallant.' Often prefixed as a sort of title to the name or designation of the person addressed, as in 'bully Bottom,' 'bully doctor.'" Bale, *Three Lawes*, 475 (1538):

"Though she be somewhat olde  
It is myne owne swete bullye  
My muskyne and my mullye."

Italian expressions like "coragio" (*The Tempest*, v. i. 258) were common amongst the tavern wits of Shake-

spere's day; why not a Dutch or German one?

14. *By'r lakin*] by our Ladykin, little lady. Cf. *The Tempest*, III. iii. 1. The "*Berlakin*" of Q 1 and the "*Berlaken*" of F 1 probably represent the pronunciation of the time. Craig quotes Sir Thomas More (*Works*, 2 vols., Rastell, 1557), vol. ii. p. 849, Apologie, "By our lakens, brother, husband, quoth she."

14. *parlous*] perilous, excessive, wonderful. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. ii. 45-18, 19. *seem to say*] Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, II. iv. 11, "An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify."

25. *eight and six*] the common ballad metre of alternate verses of eight and six syllables. Capell, however, refers

*Bot.* No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

*Snout.* Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

*Star.* I fear it, I promise you.

*Bot.* Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: 30  
to bring in,—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to't.

*Snout.* Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not 35  
a lion.

*Bot.* Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—“Ladies,—or, fair ladies,—I 40  
would wish you,—or, I would request you,—or, I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:”— 45

28. *afeard*] *afraid* Rowe (ed. 2). 30. *yourselves*] Ff, *your selfe* Qq. 34.  
*to't*] *toote* Q 1; *to it* Q 2, Ff. 40. *defect*] *deffect* Q 2.

the expression to the number of lines, namely, fourteen, “which is the measure of that time's sonnets; all Shakespeare's are writ in it.”

31. *God shield us!*] Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. i. 41, “God shield I should disturb devotion!”

32. *dreadful thing*] Malone finds “an odd coincidence” here between this remark and an incident which happened in Scotland in 1594, at the christening of the eldest son of James I. “While the king and queen were at dinner, a chariot was drawn in by ‘a black-moore. This chariot should have been drawne in by a lyon, but

because his presence might have brought some feare to the nearest, or that the sights of the lights and the torches might have commoved his tameness, it was thought meete that the Moore should supply that room.”

33. *fearful wild-fowl*] I think the source of this well-known expression of Bottom's is to be found in Lord Berners's *Huon of Burdeaux*, referred to *ante*, II. i. 232: “Huon beheld him [the gryffon] and sawe howe he was a crewell ‘fowle’ . . . ‘ferful’ it was to beholde hym.”

44. *of my life*] i.e. for my life, for me. Cf. v. i. 229, “’twere pity on my life.”

70 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM [ACT III.

and there, indeed, let him name his name; and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

*Quin.* Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for you know, Pyramus and Thisby 50 meet by moonlight.

*Snout.* Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

*Bot.* A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine. 55

*Quin.* Yes, it doth shine that night.

*Bot.* Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

47. *them*] Qq, *him* Ff. 52. *Snout*] Sn. Qq, F 1; *Snug* F 2, 3, 4. 55.  
Enter *Pucke*] Ff, omitted Qq. 57. *Bot.*] Cet. Q 1.

46. *name his name*] Malone thinks it not improbable that Shakespeare meant to allude to a fact which happened in his time at an entertainment exhibited before Queen Elizabeth. It is recorded in a MS. collection of stories entitled *Merry Passages and Feasts*, MS. Harl. 6395, fol. 366: "There was a spectacle presented to Q: Elizabeth vpon the water, and amongst others Harr. Golding: was to represent Arion vpon the Dolphin's backe, but finding his voice to be very hoarse and vnpleasant when he came to performe it, he teares of his Disguise, and swears he was none of Arion not he, but eene honest Har. Goldingham; which blunt discoverie pleas'd the Queene better, then if it had gone through in the right way; yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well." Scott, in his *Kenilworth*, as Knight reminds us, has transferred the story to "honest Mike Lambourne."

54. *calendar*] "The popular almanac of Shakespeare's time was that of

Leonard Digges (1575), the worthy precursor of the Moores and the Murphys. He had a higher ambition than these his degenerate descendants; for, while they prophecy only by the day and the week, he prognosticated 'for ever,' as his title-page shows: A Prognostication 'euerlastinge' of right good effect, fruitfully augmented by the auctour, contayning plain, briefe, plesaunte, chosen rules to iudge the Weather by the Sunne, Moone, Starres, Comets, Rainebow, Thunder, Cloudes, with other extraordinary tokens, not omitting the Aspects of the Planets, with a briefe iudgement, 'for ever,' of Plenty, Lucke, Sickenes, Dearth, Warres, &c., opening also many natural causes worthy to be knowen." Knight.

58. *great chamber*] referring, no doubt, to the large reception-room in Elizabethan houses. Craig compares *Merry Wives*, I, i. 157, where Slender, speaking of Pistol picking his pocket, says, "Ay, by these gloves, did he, or

*Quin.* Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of 60  
thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to dis-  
figure, or to present, the person of moonshine.  
Then, there is another thing: we must have a  
wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and  
Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink 65  
of a wall.

*Snout.* You can never bring in a wall. What say you,  
Bottom?

*Bot.* Some man or other must present wall: and let  
him have some plaster, or some loam, or some 70  
rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let  
him hold his fingers thus, and through that  
cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

*Quin.* If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit  
down, every mother's son, and rehearse your 75  
parts. Pyramus, you begin. When you have  
spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and  
so every one according to his cue.

67. Snout] Sno. Q 1; Sn. Q 2, F 1; Snu. F 2; Snug F 3, 4. 70. loam] lime Collier. 71. and let] Delius (Collier); or let Qq, Ff. 72. that] the Rowe.

I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else."

62, 69. *present*] represent. Cf. *The Tempest*, IV. i. 167, "when I presented Ceres" (of Ariel).

71, 72. *and let him*] Dyce thinks, and rightly, that the mistake in the Folio of "or" for "and" was occasioned by "or" having occurred twice before.

77. *brake*] This word is used by English writers—(1) in the sense of fern, bracken; see the *Promptorium Parvulorum* (c. 1440), 47, Brake, herbe or ferme; and Turner, *Herbal* (1562), II. A ij b: "*Felix femina* . . . is the common ferne or brake which the Norther men call a braken": (2) in the

sense of a clump of bushes, brushwood, or briars; a thicket (originally meaning tree stumps or broken branches, and etymologically connected with "break"). See *Mirr. Mag.* (1563), Jane Shore, xviii., "what scratting bryers do growe upon such brakes." See also the *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. Craig rather leans to the opinion that in this passage and in III. ii. 15, "enter'd in a brake," the word bears the first meaning, but the second meaning in II. i. 227, "hide me in the brake," and III. i. 109, "through brake, through brier." It is doubtful, however, whether Shakespeare really intended any valid distinction.

78. *cue*] in theatrical usage, the con-

*Enter PUCK behind.*

*Puck.* What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,  
So near the cradle of the fairy queen? 80

What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;

An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

*Quin.* Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

*Bot.* "Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,"—

*Quin.* Odorous, odorous. 85

*Bot.*—"odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.

79. *Scene II.*] Pope. Enter Puck behind] Enter Robin Qq, Ff. 82. *too, perhaps*] *to perhappes* Q 1. 84, 86, 105. Bot.] Pyra. or Pyr. Q 1, Pir. Q 2, Ff. 84. *flowers*] *flower* Pope; *of*] *have* Collier (ed. 2); *savours*] *Savour's* Rowe, *savour* Halliwell. 85. *Odorous, odorous*] Collier, *Odours, odorous* Qq, *Odours, odours* Ff. 87. *hath*] *that* Rowe (ed. 1), *doth* Rowe (ed. 2).

cluding word or words of a speech serving as a signal or direction to another actor to enter. See Strype, *Ecclasiastical Memorials*, iii. App. xi. 31, "Amen must be answered to the thanksgevyng, not as to a man's q in a playe." Cf. 102, 103 of this scene, and v. i. 186, *post*. Shakespeare, however, sometimes uses the word in the looser or more figurative sense of "the part assigned to one to play at a particular juncture, the proper course to take," e.g. *Merry Wives*, III. ii. 46, "The clock gives me my cue"; III. iii. 39, "Mistress Page, remember you your cue"; *Richard III.* III. iv. 27, "Had not you come upon your cue"; *Hamlet*, II. ii. 587, "Had he the motive and the cue for passion"; and *King Lear*, I. ii. 147, "my cue is villanous melancholy." "The origin of the word is uncertain. It has been taken as=F. *queue*, tail, on the ground that it is the tail or ending of the preceding speech, but no such use of 'queue' has ever obtained in French (where the 'cue' is called *réplique*), and no literal sense of

'queue' or 'cue' leading up to this appears in 16th c. English. On the other hand, in 16th and early 17th c. it is found written *Q*, *q*, *q*, or *qu*; and it was explained by 17th c. writers as a contraction for some Latin word (*sc. qualis, quando*) said to have been used to mark in actors' copies of plays the points at which they were to begin. But no evidence confirming this has been found." *New Eng. Dict.*

81. *a play toward*] Cf. *As You Like It*, v. iv. 35, "There is, sure, another flood toward."

84.] It will be noted that the speeches delivered at this rehearsal do not correspond with those delivered before the Duke. The mere repetition of the rehearsal at the public performance would, no doubt, have been wearisome, as Furness remarks.

84. *odious*] Cf. Dogberry's famous reversal of this blunder in *Much Ado*, III. v. 18, "Comparisons are odorous."

87.] Malone supposes two lines to be lost here.

But, hark, a voice! stay thou but here a whit,

And by and by I will to thee appear,"— [Exit.

*Puck*.—A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here! 90

[Aside. Exit.

*Flu*. Must I speak now?

*Quin*. Ay, marry, must you: for you must understand,  
he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is  
to come again.

*Flu*. "Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue, 95

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,

Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb."

*Quin*. "Ninus' tomb," man. Why, you must not 100  
speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus:  
you speak all your part at once, cues and all.

Pyramus enter; your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

88. *a whit*] Theobald, *a while* Qq, Ff. 89. *appear*,—] Furness; *appear*.  
Qq, Ff. [Exit] Qq, Exit Pir. Ff. 90. *Puck*] Ff, Quin. Qq; —A] Furness. [Exit]  
Capell. 91, 95, 104. *Flu*.] Thys. or This. or Thisb. Qq, Ff. 92, 100, 106.  
Quin.] Pet. Qq, Ff. 97. *brisky juvenal*] *brisky juvenile* Rowe (ed. 2), *briskly*  
*juvenile* Hanmer. 103. Enter Pyramus] Rowe.

88. *a whit*] Theobald's correction for the "a while" of the Qq, Ff. I think we must have a rhyme to "sweet," corresponding with the rhyme of "hue" with "Jew" in the quatrain of *Flute*, 95-98, *post*. "Whit," however, in line 17, *ante*, and in every other passage where it occurs in the plays, is used with a negative.

90. *Puck*] "Note that the Qq have *Quin*., a serious blunder, whereof the correction adds much to the value which we should attach to the text of F 1. In a modernised text, I think, a period and a dash should close the preceding line, and a dash commence the present, so as to join the two speeches, and make *Puck*'s the continua-

tion, in sense, of *Pyramus*'s: "And by and by I will to thee appear,— —a stranger *Pyramus* than e'er play'd here!" adds *Puck* in anticipation of the Ass-head which he was about to apply. I find by a MS. marginal note, that I am herein anticipated by Allen." Furness.

97. *juvenal*] used in the affected or euphuistic sense, and evidently ridiculed by Shakespeare. Cf. the "congruent epitheton" of *Love's Labour's Lost*, I. ii. 8, "my tender *juvenal*"; and "the *juvenal*, the prince your master" of *2 Henry IV*, I. ii. 22.

97. *eke*] becoming obsolete in Shakespeare's time, and only used by him in burlesque passages.



*Flu.* O,—“As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.”

*Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head.*

*Bot.* “If I were true, fair Thisby, I were only thine :” 105

*Quin.* O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted.

Pray, masters ! fly, masters ! help !

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

*Puck.* I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,

Through bog, through brook, through bush, through  
brake, through brier :

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound, 110

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire ;

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and  
burn,

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*

104. *Re-enter . . . head*] Capell ; omitted Qq, Ff. 105. *If I were true, fair Thisby*] Editor (Hudson conj.) ; *If I were fair, Thisby*, Qq, Ff ; *If I were, fair Thisby*. Collier (Malone conj.). 107. [*Exeunt . . .*] omitted Qq, The Clownes all *Exit F 1*, The Clownes all *Exeunt F 2*. 108. *about*] *'bout* Dyce, ed. 2 (Walker conj.). 109. *Through bog, through brook*] Lettsom conj., *Through bog, through mire* Johnson conj., *Through bog, through burn* Ritson conj. 113. *Enter Píramus with the Asse head*] Ff, omitted Qq.

105. *If I were true, fair Thisby*,] Malone proposed to punctuate : “If I were, fair Thisby,” meaning, presumably, “if I were true.” Bottom’s words are spoken in reply to Thisby’s “As true as truest horse,” etc. Hudson points out that the verse is remarkably regular throughout the interlude ; and the reading of the Qq, Ff is evidently not so, but it is commonly retained on the supposition of its being a blunder of Bottom’s.

108. *a round*] a dance, as we say. In this sense the preceding “about” seems somewhat superfluous. The Qq, Ff print “round” with a capital letter, clearly showing that a substantive was intended.

Furness, however, suggests “around,” as an adverb, and urges “that it may receive the stamp of respectability by admission into Shakespeare’s vocabulary” ; but it is not found either in Shakespeare or in the Authorised Version of 1611.

109. *through brook*] a sound interpolation. The line is clearly defective without it. “Bourn” seems also a suitable word.

113. The *Asse-head*] Furness aptly remarks : “I cannot but think that this trifling expression stamps this stage-direction as taken from a play-house copy.” See Introduction.

*Bot.* Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them, to make me afeard. 115

*Re-enter* SNOUT.

*Snout.* O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

*Bot.* What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you?

*Re-enter* QUINCE.

*Quin.* Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. 120 *[Exit.*

*Bot.* I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that 125 they shall hear I am not afraid. *[Sings.*

“The ousel cock, so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,  
The thristle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill:” 130

115. *Re-enter* Snout] Capell; Enter . . . Qq, Ff. 116, 117. *see on thee?* *see on thee? Ag ass's head?* Johnson conj. 119. *[Exit* Snout] Dyce; *Exit* Capell (at line 117); omitted Qq, Ff; *Re-enter* Quince] Capell; Enter Quince Q 1; Enter Peter Quince Q 2, Ff. 125. *I will*] *will* F 3, 4. *[Sings]* Pope; omitted Qq, Ff. 127. *ousel*] Pope, *Woosell* Qq, F 1, 2, 3; *Woosel* F 4. 130. *with little*] Qq, and *little* Ff.

118, 119. *you see an ass-head of your own, do you?* Johnson needlessly proposed to add to Snout's preceding speech, “An ass's head?” but Halliwell says the phrase was a vernacular one of the day. Cf. Mrs. Quickly in the *Merry Wives*, I. iv. 135, “You shall have An fool's head of your own.”

121. *translated*] transformed. Cf. I. i. 191; and the passage in *Comedy*

*of Errors*, II. ii. 191-201, “This is the fairy land . . . If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.”

127. *ousel cock*] the male blackbird, *Turdus merula*. Cotgrave gives: “Merle: m. A Mearle, Owsell, Blackbird. Merle noir. The Blackbird, or ordinarie Owsell.”

129. *thristle*] the thrush, *Turdus musicus*. Furness well remarks that

*Tita.* What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

[Awaking.]

*Bot.* [Sings.] "The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray,

Whose note full many a man doth mark,

And dares not answer, nay;" — 135

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a  
bird? Who would give a bird the lie, though  
he cry "cuckoo" never so?

*Tita.* I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note, 140

131. [Awaking] Waking Theobald; Sings waking Pope; omitted Qq, Ff.  
132. [Sings] Theobald; omitted Qq, Ff. 140. *enamour'd* *enamoured* Q 1, F 4;  
*enamored* Q 2, F 1, 2, 3.

the spelling "Trassell" in the Qq and F 1 of the *Merchant of Venice*, i. ii. 65 ["if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering"], probably with a broad "a," gives the pronunciation. There is little doubt that the sounds were hardly distinguishable. Cf. the rhyme of "crab" with "bob" in i. i. 48, 49.

130. *quill*] pipe, note; not, as Schmidt thinks, "wing-feather."

133. *plain-song cuckoo gray*] "plain-song" here probably refers to plain melody without any variation or accompaniment. Chaucer, in *The Cuckoo and Nightingale*, 118, makes the cuckoo say, "For my song is both true and *plaine*." Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (p. 51 note), says: "Prick-song meant harmony written or pricked down, in opposition to plain-song, where the descant rested with the will of the singer"; and Harting, *Ornithology of Shakespeare*, 1871, p. 150, says: "The cuckoo, as long ago remarked by John Heywood (*Epigrams*, black letter, 1587), begins to sing early in the season with the interval of a minor third; the bird then proceeds to a major third, next to a fourth, then to a fifth, after which its voice breaks,

without attaining a minor sixth. It may therefore be said to have done much for musical science, because from this bird has been derived the minor scale, the origin of which has puzzled so many; the cuckoo's couplets being the minor third sung downwards." Yarrell, *British Birds*, ii. 188, thus describes the colour: "The head, neck, back and upper tail-coverts *bluish-grey* . . . chin, neck and upper part of the breast *ash-grey*."

135. *answer, nay*] "Bottom here refers to an opinion very prevalent in Shakespeare's time that the unfaithfulness of a wife was always guided by a destiny which no human power could avert." Halliwell. For a very similar idea, see *Merry Wives*, v. i. 245, 246:

"In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;

Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate."

Cf. also *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 908.

136. *set his wit to*] Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. i. 94, "Will you set your wit to a fool's?" Craig aptly remarks that the expression "I would not even my wits to you" used to be common in Ireland, at least in the north.

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;  
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,  
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

*Bot.* Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason  
for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and 145  
love keep little company together nowadays;  
the more the pity, that some honest neighbours  
will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleeke  
upon occasion.

*Tita.* Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful. 150

*Bot.* Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get  
out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine  
own turn.

*Tita.* Out of this wood do not desire to go;  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no. 155  
I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state,  
And I do love thee: therefore go with me;  
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep, 160

141-143.] as in Q 1. In Q 2, Ff, line 143 *On the first* . . . precedes line 141  
*So is mine eye* . . . 144. *mistress*] *mistresse* Qq, F 1; *maistresse* F 2, 3;  
*maistress* F 4.

148. *gleek*] a word of obscure origin; possibly a diminutive of "glee"; and used both as a verb (as in this passage) and a substantive, which is much more common. As a verb, in the transitive sense, to trick, circumvent; and intransitive (as here), to make a jest or gibe (at a person). Cf. *Henry V.* v. i. 78, "I have seen you gleeeking and galling at this gentleman." Nashe, *Strange News*, 1593, Works (ed. Grosart), ii. 197, "Not mee alone did hee revile . . . but glickt at Pap-hatchet o'ace more." Cotgrave has

"*Limer* . . . to gleeke, or looke askew at." As a substantive, see Lyly, *Euphues* (ed. Arb. 291), "What greater discourtesie . . . then with so many nips, such bitter girdes, such disdainful glickes to answer him that honoured hir." See also *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. v. 115, "What will you give us? No money, on my faith, but the gleeke"; and *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v.

156. *spirit* . . .] Cf. iii. ii. 388, Oberon's "But we are spirits of another sort."

78 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM [ACT III.

And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep :  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.—  
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Mote! and Mustard-seed!

*Enter Four Fairies.*

*First Fai.* Ready.

*Sec. Fai.* And I.

*Third Fai.* And I.

*Fourth Fai.* Where shall we go? 165

*Tita.* Be kind and courteous to this gentleman ;

Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes ;

Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries ;

The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees, 170

And, for night tapers, crop their waxen thighs,

161. *dost*] *doth* F 3, 4. 164. *Peaseblossom!* . . . *Mustard-seed!*] Qq. Enter Pease-blossome . . . Mustard-seede and four fairies Ff (as a stage-direction). *Mote*] Grant White; *Moth* Qq, Ff. 165. *Scene III.*] Pope. Enter . . .] Enter foure Fairyes Qq (Fairies Q 2). *First Fai. Ready* . . . All. *Where shall we go?*] Capell; Fairies. *Ready; and I, and I, and I, where shall we go?* Qq, Ff (*Ready: goe?* Q 1); 1 *Fai. Ready*; 2 *Fai. And I*; 3 *Fai. And I*; 4 *Fai. Where shall we go?* Steevens, 1793 (Farmer conj.).

164. *Mote*] The form "Moth" is the invariable spelling in the Qq, Ff. See, for example, v. i. 324, where the old copies have "A Moth wil turne the ballance," the pronunciation of the word being undoubtedly "mote." See also *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. iii. 161:

"You found his Moth, the King your Moth did see;  
But I a beame doe finde in each of three";

*King John*, iv. i. 92, "O heaven, that there were but a moth in yours"; and *As You Like It*, iii. iii. 7, "I am here with thee and thy goats as the most

capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths." I see nothing whatever to be gained by the retention of the old spelling.

168. *apricocks*] The earlier and more correct spelling of "apricots." See Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*, s.v.

168. *dewberries*] Most probably the fruit of the dwarf mulberry or knot-berry, the fruit being still, as Halliwell remarked, called the dewberry by the Warwickshire peasantry, and exceedingly plentiful in the lanes between Stratford-on-Avon and Aston Cantlowe. See Ellacombe, *supra*, s.v.

And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,  
To have my love to bed, and to arise;  
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,  
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes: 175  
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

*First Fai.* Hail, mortal!

*Sec. Fai.* Hail!

*Third Fai.* Hail!

*Fourth Fai.* Hail! 180

*Bot.* I cry your worships' mercy, heartily. I beseech  
your worship's name.

*Cob.* Cobweb.

*Bot.* I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good  
master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall 185  
make bold with you.—Your name, honest gentle-  
man?

*Peas.* Peaseblossom.

*Bot.* I pray you, commend me to mistress Squash,  
your mother, and to master Peascod, your father. 190  
Good master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of  
more acquaintance too.—Your name, I beseech  
you, sir?

177-180. *First Fai. Hail, mortal* . . . *Fourth Fai. Hail!* Capell; 1 *Fai. Haile, mortall, haile!* 2 *Fai. Haile*; 3 *Fai. Haile* Qq, Ff. 181. *worships'* *worship's* Rowe. 184. *you of*] Qq, Ff; *of you* Rowe. 191. *you of*] Qq, *of you* Ff. 192. *too*] to Qq, F 1.

172. *glow-worm's eyes*] Shakespeare here uses a certain amount of poetic licence, and does not see with the eye of the naturalist. The phosphorescence, as is well known, comes from the abdomen of the female insect. Cf. III. ii. 188, "eyes of light."

173. *To have my love to bed*] Cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, scene ii. 39, "we'll have thee to a couch."

184. *desire you of*] Cf. III. i. 44, *ante*, "it were pity of my life"; and Chapman's *An Humorous Dayes Mirth* (Works, vol. i. p. 55), "I do desire *you* of more acquaintance."

189. *Squash*] a soft unripe peascod. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. v. 165, "not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod."

*Mus.* Mustard-seed.

*Bot.* Good master Mustard-seed, I know your patience 195  
well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath  
devoured many a gentleman of your house: I  
promise you, your kindred hath made my eyes  
water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance,  
good master Mustard-seed. 200

*Tita.* Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye;  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,

Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. 205

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Wood.*

*Enter* OBERON.

*Obe.* I wonder if Titania be awaked;

Then, what it was that next came in her eye,  
Which she must dote on in extremity.

*Enter* PUCK.

Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit?

What night-rule now about this haunted grove? 5

194.] After this line F 1 inserts *Peas. Pease-blossome*; omitted in F 2, 3, 4.

*Scene II.*

*Scene II.*] Capell; *Scene IV.* Pope. Theobald continues the scene.  
Another . . . Wood] Capell. Enter Oberon] Enter King of Fairies and Robin  
Goodfellow Qq; Enter King of Fairies (Pharies F 1), solus Ff. 3. Enter  
Puck] Ff, omitted Qq. 4. *spirit*] *sprite* Pope. 5. *haunted*] *gaurated* F 1.

202, 203. *The moon . . . she weeps*] (if these lines are in fact Shake-  
"alluding to the supposed origin of speare's).  
dew in the moon." Walker, *Crit.* iii.

48. Cf. *Macbeth*, III. v. 23:

"Upon the corner of the moon  
There hangs a vaporous drop pro-  
found"

*Scene II.*

5. *night-rule*] "night-revel, night-  
sport." Dyce. "*Rule.* Apparently put  
for behaviour or conduct; with some

*Puck.* My mistress with a monster is in love.  
 Near to her close and consecrated bower,  
 While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,  
 A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,  
 That work for bread upon Athenian stalls, 10  
 Were met together to rehearse a play,  
 Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.  
 The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,  
 Who Pyramus presented, in their sport  
 Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake : 15  
 When I did him at this advantage take,  
 An ass's noll I fixed on his head ;

6, 7. *love*. . . . *Near* . . . . *bower*,] Rowe ; *loue*, *Neere*, . . . . *bower* Q 1 ; *loue*, *Neere* . . . . *bower*, Q 2, Ff. 13. *thick-skin*] *thick-skull* Hanmer. 14. *sport*] Rowe ; *sport*, Qq, Ff. 17. *noll*] *nowl* Johnson.

allusion perhaps to the frolics called *mis-rule*.<sup>6</sup> Nares's *Glossary*. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. iii. 130, "Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favour at anything more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule." Halliwell quotes from the *Statutes of the Streets of London* (Stowe, p. 666), "No man shall, after the houre of nine at the night, keep any rule whereby any such sudden outcry be made in the still of the night," etc.

9. *patches*] "patch" is properly a domestic fool or clown, and is used also as a term of contempt, perhaps derived from the Italian *pazzo*, or from his wearing a "patched" or parti-coloured coat. See *past*, IV. i. 212, "man is but a patched fool." In the present passage it means probably only meanly-dressed fellows or "tatterdemalions" (Johnson).

12. *nuptial-day*] "wedding-day" in II. i. 139.

13. *thick-skin*] Cf. *Merry Wives*, IV. v. 2, "What wouldst thou have, boor? what, thickskin?" and Holland's *Pliny* (Bk. xi. ch. 9), p. 346, "Some measure not the fineness of spirit and wit by the puritie of blood, but suppose crea-

tures are brutish, more or lesse, according as their skin is thicker or thinner . . . And hereto they bring men also, as a prooffe, who are thicke skinned, and more brawnie; for to be more grosse of sence and understanding."

13. *barren*] dull, brainless. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. v. 90, "such a barren rascal"; and *Hamlet*, III. ii. 46, "some quantity of barren spectators."

13. *sort*] crew, company. Cf. line 21, *infra*; *Richard II.* IV. i. 246, "a sort of traitors"; *2 Henry VI.* II. i. 167, "a sort of naughty persons," and III. ii. 277, "a sort of tinkers"; and *Richard III.* V. iii. 316, "a sort of vagabonds."

17. *noll*] "A grotesque word for head, like pate, noddle . . . In the Wicliffite versions of Genesis xlix. 8, where the earlier has 'thin hondis in the skulles of thin enemyes,' the later has 'thin hondis schulen be in the nollis of thin enemyes'; the Latin being *cervicibus*. Probably 'noll,' like 'noddle,' was the back part of the head, and so included the neck. Cotgrave has 'Occipital . . . belonging to the noddle; or hinder part of the head.'" Wright.



Anon, his Thisbe must be answered,  
 And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,  
 As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye, 20  
 Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,  
 Rising and cawing at the gun's report,  
 Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky;  
 So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;  
 And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls; 25

19. *mimic*] *Minnick* Q 1; *Minnock* Q 2; *Mimmick* F 1, 2, 3; *Mimick* F 4.  
 21. *russet-pated*] F 4; *russet pated* Q 1; *russet pated* Q 2; *russet-pated* F 1, 2,  
 3; *russet-pated* Wright (Bennett conj.) withdrawn. 25. *our stamp*] a *stump*  
 Johnson (Theobald conj.), *our stump* Theobald conj.

19. *mimic*] actor. Malone quotes from Dekker's *Guls Hornebooke*, 1609, p. 253, ed. Grosart, "and draw what troope you can from the stage after you; the Mimicks are beholden to you, for allowing them elbow roome"; and also from the *Satiromastix* of Marston and Dekker: "and took'st mad Ieronimoes part, to get service 'among the Mimickes." Wright quotes from Herrick's *The Wake*, ii. 63:

"Morris-dancers thou shalt see,  
 Marian too in Pagentry:  
 And a Mimick to devise  
 Many grinning properties."

21. *russet-pated choughs*] grey-headed jackdaws. "The jackdaw, and not the Cornish chough or red-legged crow, is the bird referred to here. The head of the jackdaw about the ear-coverts and neck is 'grey'; and 'russet' meant not 'red,' but 'grey' or 'brown,' the colour of undyed wool, in most cases; although sometimes it was loosely applied." Marshall. In the *Promptorium Parvulorum* (circa 1440) we find, "*Russet*, Gresius," which is the French *gris*; in Junius's *Nomenclator* (1587), "*Ravius* . . . *Faune, tané, rosset*, russet or tawnie colour"; and in Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598), "*Grigietto*, a fine graie or sheepes russet." Cotgrave (1611) has "gris. m. ise. f., Gray, light-russet,

grizzle, ash-coloured, hoarie, whitish." In Shakespeare's day, and long before and after, chough and jackdaw seem to have been practically synonymous. See the passages in Holland's *Pliny*, x. 29 (vol. i. p. 285), and xvii. 14 (vol. p. i. 516). Cf. *King Lear*, iv. vi. 13, "the crows and choughs that wing the midway air," and Craig's note thereon: "also compare Statute 24, Henry VIII. cap. 10, 'Rookes, crowes, and choughes do yecerey devour and consume a wonderful quantity of corne and graine' (ed. 1636, p. 528). Still it is quite likely that the bird here referred to may have been the Cornish chough, *Pyrocorax graculus*, which is now sometimes to be met with on Beachy Head, and may well then have been common on Dover Cliff." Shakespeare, accompanying his brother actors in their provincial tours, was certainly familiar with Dover; but even if the Cornish chough was common there in his time, it is more probable that in this passage of the *Midsommer-Night's Dream*, written as it must have been in the late autumn of 1594, he was thinking only of the jackdaw, the more common bird of the Warwickshire and Gloucestershire fields.

25. *at our stamp*] Johnson says: "Fairies are never represented stamping, or of a size that should give force

He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.  
 Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,  
 Made senseless things begin to do them wrong:  
 For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;  
 Some sleeves; some hats: from yielders all things  
 catch.

30

I led them on in this distracted fear,  
 And left sweet Pyramus translated there:  
 When in that moment, so it came to pass,  
 Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise. 35  
 But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes

30. *yielders*] F 3, 4; *yeelders* Qq, F 1, 2. 36. *latch'd*] *latcht* Q 1, F 3, 4;  
*lact* Q 2, F 1, 2; *leech'd* Hamner; *hatch'd* Daniel conj.

to a stamp . . . I read at 'a stump.'"

So Drayton, *Nymphidia* (ed. 1748), 166:

"A 'stump' doth 'trip him' in his  
 pace,

Down fell poor Hob upon his face,  
 etc."

But, on the other hand, Steevens well remarks, "The 'stamp' of a fairy might be efficacious though not loud; neither is it necessary to suppose, when supernatural beings are spoken of, that the size of the agent determines the force of the action." See IV. i. 90, *post*:

"Sound, music! Come, my queen,  
 take hands with me,

And 'rock' the ground whereon  
 these sleepers be."

And Ritson quotes Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584: "Robin Goodfellow . . . would chafe exceedingly if the maid or good wife of the house . . . laid anie clothes for him besides his messe of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith, What have we here? Hemton, hamton, here will I nevermore tread nor stampen." Furness remarks that "Puck's modern change to 'our,'

when he was the sole agent, is somewhat unaccountable," and quotes a highly ingenious conjecture of Allen (in MS.): "'At one stamp,'—as we might say; at one bound, at one rush; for they started so instantly, all together, that all their feet struck the ground, on starting to run, with one stamp, one noise."

31. *distracted*] See "feigning," I. i. 31.  
 36. *latch'd*] To "latch with love-juice" is to "drop" love-juice upon, or simply to moisten, smear, or anoint therewith. There has been considerable diversity of opinion among commentators as to the true meaning of the word in Shakespeare. But "'drop' the liquor," II. i. 178, seems fairly conclusive, modified, however, in some degree by "'streak' her eyes," II. i. 257; and "'anoint' his eyes," 261; also "'crush' this herb into" in III. ii. 366. Skeat points out that the word here used has nothing to do with "latch," "to catch," and that the explanation depends upon the fact that there are two distinct verbs, both spelt "latch," which are wholly unrelated to each other. He says: "If

With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

*Puck.* I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—

And the Athenian woman by his side;

That when he waked, of force she must be eyed. 40

*Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA.*

*Obe.* Stand close; this is the same Athenian.

*Puck.* This is the woman, but not this the man.

*Dem.* O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?

Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

*Her.* Now I but chide, but I should use thee worse; 45

For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,

Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in knee-deep,

38. *Puck*] Rowe; Rob. Qq, Ff; *too*] to Qq, F 1. 40. *waked*] *wak't* Qq, Ff; *wakes* Pope. 41. *Scene V.*] Pope. 42. *Puck*] Rowe; Rob. Qq, Ff. 48, 49. *Being . . . too*] Rowe (ed. 2); one line in Qq, Ff. 48. *knee-deep*] Phelps, Craig (Coleridge *sed quare* Maginn conj.); *the deep* Qq, Ff.

we will give up the A.-S. *gelaccan* and consider the common English verb 'to leak,' we shall soon come to a satisfactory result. To 'leak' means to admit drops of water, and 'latch' is practically the causal form. The nearest related A.-S. word is *leccan*, to moisten, wet, irrigate." In the other passages where "latch" is used by Shakespeare, it certainly has the sense of "catch," from A.-S. *laccan* or *gelaccan*. See *Macbeth*, IV. iii. 195:

"But I have words

That would be howl'd out in the desert air,

Where hearing should not latch them";

and *Sonnet*, cxiii. 6:

"For it [*i.e.* the eye] no form delivers to the heart

Of bird, or flower, or shape, which it doth latch."

And Holland's *Pliny*, viii. 24, of the Ichneumon: "In fight he sets up his

taile, and whips about, turning his taile to the enemy, and therein latcheth and receiveth all the strokes of the Aspis." Dyce adopts Hanmer's interpretation, "letch'd, licked over," Fr. *lecher*, to lick; but this seems inadmissible.

48. *o'er shoes in blood*] Steevens compares *Macbeth*, III. iv. 136:

"I am in blood

Stepp'd in so far, that should I wade no more

Returning were as tedious as give o'er";

and Wright, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. i. 24:

"*Pro.* For he was more than over shoes in love.

*Val.* 'Tis true; for you are over boots in love."

Cf. also *Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 106, "A man may go over shoes in the grime of it."

48. *knee-deep*] It is a matter of some

And kill me too. . . . .

The sun was not so true unto the day, 50

As he to me: would he have stol'n away

From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon,

This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon

May through the centre creep, and so displease

Her brother's noon-tide with the Antipodes. 55

49. *too*] to Qq; *And kill me too, nor leave me here to weep* Editor conj. 52.  
*From*] *From* Q1. 54. *displease*] *disease* Hanmer, *displace* Long MS. and D.  
 Wilson conj., *disseise* Annandale conj. 55. *with the*] *i' th'* Warburton.

doubt whether this excellent and certain emendation is to be attributed to Coleridge or Maginn. Walker (*Crit.* iii. 49) says, "Read, with Coleridge, 'knee-deep.'" Compare *Winter's Tale*, i. ii. 186, "Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!" and Heywood, *Woman Killed with Kindness*, Dodsley, vii. 268:

"Come, come, let's in;  
 Once over shoes, we are straight o'er  
 head in sin."

Dyce adopts this reading, attributing it to Coleridge, most probably on the authority of Walker simply, but giving no reference to any passage in Coleridge. I agree with Furness in his "strong suspicion" that the emendation is to be attributed to Maginn. In the latter's *Shakespeare Papers*, 1860, p. 138 note, he says: "Should we not read 'knee deep'? As you are already over your shoes, wade on until the bloody tide reaches your knees. In Shakespeare's time 'knee' was generally spelt 'kne'; and between 'the' and 'kne' there is not much difference in writing." Furness objects on the ground that "in water knee-deep we can certainly wade, but it can hardly be said that we can 'plunge' into it." But the objection seems to me untenable if not hypercritical. Shakespeare, I think, uses "plunge" here, not in the sense of complete immersion—otherwise how then could Demetrius kill Hermia too—but simply in the general

sense of a further advance in the tide of blood on the part of Demetrius; and besides the expression "*the deep*," i.e. of blood, as a metaphor, seems highly overstrained and needless for this particular purpose, i.e. the killing of Hermia.

49. *And kill me too*] made a separate line by Rowe, who is followed by all editors. The broken line may or may not be explained by the change of subject, but I am inclined to think that some words have dropped out, forming a line rhyming with the preceding couplet, and making with them a triplet. It is noteworthy that there are triplet lines occurring in this scene, in 159-161 and 166-168.

54. *the centre*] i.e. of the earth, and therefore of the universe, according to the Ptolemaic astronomy. Cf. *Hamlet*, ii. ii. 159, "though it [truth] were hid indeed Within the centre."

54. *displease*] "It is pretty certain 'displease' is a corruption of the text," says Marshall, and I am inclined to agree with him. He proceeds, "I cannot make any sense of 'displease'; 'displace' would seem a more natural word to use; but it does not rhyme with 'Antipodes.' Dr. Annandale suggests, very ingeniously, 'disseise' = to deprive of, to dispossess; a word used by Spenser and Dryden." For the use of "disease," cf. *Coriolanus*, i. iii. 117, "As she is now, she will but disease our better mirth."

It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;  
So should a murderer look, so dread, so grim.

*Dem.* So should the murder'd look ; and so should I,  
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty :  
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60  
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

*Her.* What's this to my Lysander ? where is he ?  
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me ?

*Dem.* I had rather give his carcase to my hounds.

*Her.* Out, dog ! out, cur ! thou drivest me past the  
bounds 65

Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then ?

Henceforth be never number'd among men !

O ! once tell true, tell true, even for my sake ;

Durst thou have look'd upon him, being awake,

And hast thou kill'd him sleeping ? O brave touch ! 70

Could not a worm, an adder, do so much ?

An adder did it ; for with doubler tongue

• Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

*Dem.* You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood :

57, 60. *murderer*] *murtherer* Q 1. 57. *dread*] Pope ; *dead* Qq, Ff. 58.  
*murder'd*] *murthered* Q 1, *murdered* Q 2, *murderer* Ff. 60. *look*] *look's* Qq, 65.  
*looks* Ff. 64. *I had*] Q 1, *Id'e* Q 2, *I'd'e* Ff, *I'd* Rowe, *I'ad* Pope.  
*bounds*] *bonds* Q 2. 68. *true*.] *true* : Q 1 ; *true* Q 2, F 1. 69. *have*] Qq, *a* Ff.  
70. *touch*] *tutch* Qq, Ff. 72. *An*] *And* F 2. 74. *on*] in Steevens conj.

57. *dread*] I think Pope's reading is justified by the context. Steevens, in defence of "dead," compares 2 *Henry IV.* I. i. 71 :

"Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,

So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone";

but it is difficult to see the bearing of the quotation on the present passage. Capell remarks: "Pope's change to

'dread' is implied in 'grim'; by 'dead' is meant 'pale.'"

70. *touch*] exploit or stroke. Johnson. "A *touch* anciently signified a *trick* or *feat*. Ascham has, 'The shrewd *touches* of many curst boys.' And, in the old story of *Howleglas*, 'For at all times he did some mad *touch*.'" Hudson.

74. *on a mispris'd mood*] i.e. in mistaken anger. Cf. *Two Gentlemen of*

I am not guilty of Lysander's blood ; 75

Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

*Her.* I pray thee, tell me, then, that he is well.

*Dem.* An if I could, what should I get therefore.

*Her.* A privilege, never to see me more.

And from thy hated presence part I so : 80

See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit.*

*Dem.* There is no following her in this fierce vein :

Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.

So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe ; 85

Which now in some slight measure it will pay,

If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

*Obe.* What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight :

Of thy misprision must perforce ensue 90

Some true-love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

76. *ought*] Theobald (ed. 2) ; *ought* Qq, Ff. 78. *An*] Capell ; *And* Qq, Ff. 80, 81. *And . . . more*] So in Pope ; one line in Qq, Ff. 80. *so*] Pope ; omitted Qq, Ff. 81. *he be*] *he's* Pope. 85. *sleep*] Rowe ; *slippe* Q 1 ; *slip* Q 2, Ff. 87. [*Lies down and sleeps*] Collier ; *Ly donne* Q 1 ; *Lie downe* Q 2, Ff. 88. *Scene vi.*] Pope. 91. *turn'd, and not*] *turn'd false, not* Hamner.

*Verona*, iv. i. 51, "Who, in my mood, I stabb'd unto the heart." Cf. "misprision," line 90, *post* ; and for the legal significations of the word in the old statutes, see Rushton's *Shakespeare Illustrated by the Lex Scripta*, 1870, p. 79 *sqq.*

80. *part I so*] Pope's emendation is necessary and undoubtedly correct, but hardly his punctuation. That of the Qq, Ff, namely, the colon after "I," seems perhaps preferable.

85-87.] Marshall remarks that "there is an incongruous, prosaic,

and legal character about these lines which smells of an attorney's office." Possibly ; and the explanation may lie in Shakespeare's keen recollection of the paternal misfortunes and legal embarrassments before his departure from Stratford.

87. [*Lies down and sleeps*] The stage-direction in Q 1 and the Folio, in the imperative mood, betrays the playhouse copy.

90. *misprision*] mistake. Cf. 74, *ante*.

*Puck.* Then fate o'er-rules; that, one man holding troth,  
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

*Obe.* About the wood go swifter than the wind,  
And Helena of Athens look thou find: 95  
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer  
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood  
dear:

By some illusion see thou bring her here;  
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

*Puck.* I go, I go, *my lord*; look how I go; 100  
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [Exit.]

*Obe.* Flower of this purple dye,  
Hit with Cupid's archery,

92. *Puck*] Rowe; Robi. Q 1; Rob. Q 2, Ff; *that,*] for Hanmer. 94.  
Obe.] Ob. Qq, F 1, 3, 4; Rob. F 2. 97. *costs*] Qq, Ff; *cost* Hanmer.  
99. *do*] Q 2, *doe* Q 1, *doth* Ff. 100. *Puck*] Rowe, Robin Qq, Rob. Ff; *my*  
*lord*] Editor; *look*] *look, master* Hanmer. 101. [Exit] Q 2, Ff; omitted Q 1.

92, 93. *Then . . . oath*] Puck's excuse for his "misprision" is, according to Marshall, "that fate o'er-rules chance here; for the chance is that, for one man true to his oath in love, one finds a million who are false to it."

96. *fancy-sick*] love-sick. Cf. 1. i. 155.

96. *cheer*] "'Cheer' is from the old French *chère*, which Cotgrave thus explains: 'The face, visage, countenance, favour, looks, aspect.' Hence it naturally came to mean that which affects the face, or gives it expression." Hudson.

97. *costs*] Nearly all modern editors follow Theobald in printing the plural "cost," but the change is unnecessary. See Abbott, § 247.

97. *dear*] alluding to the old and still prevalent superstition that every sigh cost a drop of the heart's blood. So 2 *Henry VI.* III. ii. 61:

"Might . . . blood-consuming sighs  
recall his life,

I would be blind with weeping,  
sick with groans,  
Look pale as primrose, with blood-  
drinking sighs";

3 *Henry VI.* iv. iv. 22:

"Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a  
tear,

And stop the rising of blood-  
sucking sighs";

and *Hamlet*, iv. vii. 123:

"And then this 'should' is like a  
spendrift sigh,

That hurts by easing."

100. *my lord*] Cf. for this necessary interpolation, II. i. 268; 378, "post"; and iv. i. 104.

101. *Tartar's bow*] Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iv. 5, "Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath." Douce quotes Golding's *Ovid*, Book x.:

"and though that she

Did fly as swift as Arrow from a  
Turkye bowe."

Ariel in *The Tempest*, v. i. 102,  
"drinks the air before him."

Sink in apple of his eye !  
 When his love he doth espy 105  
 Let her shine as gloriously  
 As the Venus of the sky.  
 When thou wak'st, if she be by,  
 Beg of her for remedy.

*Re-enter PUCK.*

*Puck.* Captain of our fairy band, 110  
 Helena is here at hand;  
 And the youth, mistook by me,  
 Pleading for a lover's fee;  
 Shall we their fond pageant see?  
 Lord, what fools these mortals be! 115  
*Obe.* Stand aside: the noise they make  
 Will cause Demetrius to awake.  
*Puck.* Then will two at once woo one;  
 That must needs be sport alone;  
 And those things do best please me 120  
 That befall preposterously.

109. *her*] *her*, Q 1. Re-enter . . .] Capell; Enter . . .] Qq, Ff.

113. *lover's fee*] Cf. Peele's *Arraign-ment of Paris*, i. ii. 37 (Bullen), "And I will have a lover's fee; they say un-kiss'd unkind." Halliwell says that three kisses were properly a "lover's fee," and quotes from an MS. ballad, circa 1650:

"How many, saies Batt;  
 Why three, saies Matt,  
 For that's a mayden's fee."

Furness is of opinion that the meaning is rather "estate, right by virtue of his title as lover." The word "pleading" perhaps lends some weight to this view.

115. *these mortals*] Cf. "the human mortals" of II. i. 101.

119. *sport alone*] i.e. sport that nothing can match, unparalleled. See Abbott, § 18. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, i. i. 15:

"So full of shapes is fancy,  
 That it alone is high fantastical";  
 and *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. vi. 30, "I am alone the villain of the earth."

121. *preposterously*] literally "in the wrong order," as in *Othello*, i. iii. 62, "For nature so preposterously to err."



*Enter LYSANDER and HELENA.*

*Lys.* Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears:

Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,

In their nativity all truth appears. 125

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,

Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

*Hel.* You do advance your cunning more and more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish holy fray!

These vows are Hermia's; will you give her o'er? 130

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:

Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,

Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

*Lys.* I had no judgment when to her I swore.

*Hel.* Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er. 135

*Lys.* Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

*Dem.* [*Awaking.*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

122. *Scene VII.*] Pope; *Scene VI.* Warburton. 123. *come*] Qq, *comes* Ff.  
137. [*Awaking*] omitted Qq; *Awa.* Ff (end of 136).

124, 125. *vows so born . . . appears*] Furness thus paraphrases, and rightly, I think: "vows, thus born, appear, from their very nativity, to be all pure truth." "Appears," he says, "should be, according to modern grammar, in the plural; its subject is 'vows'—it is singular merely by attraction; 'all truth' is the predicate, not the subject." See Abbott, §§ 417, 376, who thinks the construction of "vows so born" to be an absolute construction.

127. *badge*] "This is an allusion to the badges (*i.e.* family crests) anciently worn on the sleeves of servants and retainers." Steevens. Cf. *Tempest*, v. i.

267, "Mark but the badges of these men, my lords, Then say if they be true."

129.] "If Lysander's present protestations are true, they destroy the truth of his former vows to Hermia, and the contest between these two truths, which in themselves are holy, must in the issue be devilish and end in the destruction of both." Wright.

133. *tales*] Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. 136:

"Truths would be tales

Where now half tales be truths."

136.] Walker suspected a line was lost here.

Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show  
 Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow! 140  
 That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,  
 Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow  
 When thou hold'st up thy hand: O let me kiss  
 This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!  
*Hel.* O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent 145  
 To set against me, for your merriment.  
 If you were civil, and knew courtesy,  
 You would not do me thus much injury.  
 Can you not hate me, as I know you do,  
 But you must join in flouts to mock me too? 150  
 If you were men, as men you are in show,  
 You would not use a gentle lady so;  
 To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,  
 When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

144. *princess*] *pureness* Hanmer, *impress* Staunton (Collier conj.), *purest* Lettsom conj., *essence* Cartwright conj. 145. *all are*] *are all* Ff. 150. *join in flouts*] *Hanner*; *joyne in soules* Qq, Ff (*joyne*, Q 1); *must join insolents* Warburton; *join in scorns or in scoffs* Johnson conj.; *join in scouls* Blackstone conj.; *join*, *ill souls* Tyrwhitt conj.; *join, in sooth*, Bailey conj.; *join insults* Spedding conj.; *too*] to Q 1, F 1, 2. 151. *were*] Qq, *are* Ff.

139. *ripe*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 1103, "ripe-red cherries"; and *As You Like it*, III. v. 120, 121, "redness in his lip A little riper."

144. *princess*] Dyce, *Remarks*, p. 48, says: "When Mr. Collier offered [his] very unnecessary conjecture, 'impress,' he did not see that these two rapturous encomiums on the hand of Helena have no connexion with each other. Demetrius terms it 'princess of pure white,' because its whiteness exceeded all other whiteness; and 'seal of bliss,' because it was to confirm the happiness of her accepted lover." Steevens quotes Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*, where the pine-apple is called "the princess of fruits."

144. *seal*] Cf. "the sealing-day," i. i. 84; and *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. xiii. 125, "My playfellow, your hand; this kingly seal, And plighter of high hearts!"

150. *in flouts*] Hanmer's reading, which is undoubtedly correct. Cf. for strong confirmation of this, II. ii. 128, Helena's "But you must 'flout' my insufficiency"; line 216 of this scene, her "To join with men in 'scorning' your poor friend"; and line 327 of this scene, *Hermia's* "Why will you suffer her to 'flout' me thus?" Steevens explains the reading of Q 1 and F as meaning "to join heartily, unite in the same mind," but this seems very far-fetched and strained.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia; 155

And now both rivals to mock Helena:

A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes

With your derision! none of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort 160

A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

*Lys.* You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;

For you love Hermia; this you know I know:

And here, with all good-will, with all my heart,

In Hermia's love I yield you up my part; 165

And yours of Helena to me bequeath,

Whom I do love, and will do till my death.

*Hel.* Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

*Dem.* Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:

If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone. 170

My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd;

159. *derision! none of]* *derision*; none of Ff; *derision, none of* Q 2; *derision None, of* Q 1. 164. *here]* *heare* Q 1. 166. *of]* in Collier, ed. 2. 167. *will do]* *will love* Cambridge editors; *till]* Q 1; to Q 2, Ff. 171. *to her]* with *her* Johnson.

157. *trim]* Cf. for a similar ironical use, 1 *Henry IV.* v. i. 137, "What is that honour? Air. A trim reckoning!"

158. *conjure]* accent on first syllable, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, II. i. 6, "Nay, I'll conjure too."

159. *sort]* Here used for "degree" or "quality." Malone. Cotgrave has: "Gens de mise, Persons of worth, sort, qualitie."

160. *extort]* usually defined as "wring," "wrest." Allen MS. (quoted by Furness) says: "May not this possibly mean, to produce by 'torture' the 'suffering' of a poor soul? To take away from a poor soul her patience seems to me commonplace."

166. *bequeath]* Shakespeare some-

times applies this word to real property, as in *King John* I. i. 109, sometimes to personal property, as it is applied at the present day, as in *As You Like It*, I. i. 2; and frequently he applies it to words and things which do not suggest the idea of such property, as in this passage, in *As You Like It*, v. iv. 169, and numerous others. See Rushton, *Shakespeare's Testamentary Language*, 1869, pp. 19 sqq.

171. *to her]* Johnson's emendation of "with" for "to," which is adopted by nearly all editors, is hardly necessary. Wright quotes other examples of "to" in a sense not far different from that of the present passage, and compares *Measure for Measure*, I. ii. 186, "Im-

And now to Helen is it home return'd,  
There to remain.

*Lys.* Helen, it is not so.

*Dem.* Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,  
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear. 175  
Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

*Re-enter HERMIA.*

*Her.* Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,  
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;  
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,  
It pays the hearing double recompence. 180  
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;  
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.  
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

*Lys.* Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

*Her.* What love could press Lysander from my side? 185

*Lys.* Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,  
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night  
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.

172. *is it*] Q 1; *it is* Q 2, Ff. 173. *There*] *There ever* Pope; *Helen*] Q 1; omitted Q 2, Ff. 175. *aby*] Q 1; *abide* Q 2, Ff; *dear*] *here* Walker conj. 176. *Re-enter . . .*] Dyce; *Enter . . .* Qq, Ff. 177. *Scene VIII.*] Pope; *Scene VII.* Warburton. 182. *thy*] Qq, *that* Ff. 188. *oes*] *orbs* Grey conj.

plore her, in my voice, that she make friends To the strict deputy"; and *Two Gentlemen*, I. i. 57, "To Milan, let me hear from thee by letters."

175. *aby*] pay or atone for. Cf. 335, *infra*; *Julius Caesar*, III. i. 94, "and let no man abide this deed"; III. ii. 122, "some will dear abide it"; Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, IV. i. 53, "Yet thou, false squire, his fault shall deare aby"; and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, III. i. (p. 425, vol. vi. ed. 1778), "Poo!hardy knight, full soon

thou shalt 'aby' This fond reproach; thy body will I bang." The Folio's "abide" is, according to Skeat, "a mere corruption." The two words are etymologically distinct, but seem to have been confused.

188. *oes*] circles. Cf. *Henry V*, Prologue, 12:

"Or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very  
casques  
That did affright the air at  
Agincourt?"

Steevens quotes from John Davies's

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,  
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so? 190

*Her.* You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

*Hel.* Lo, she is one of this confederacy!

Now I perceive they have conjoin'd, all three,  
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.

Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid! 195

Have you conspired, have you with these contrived  
To bait me with this foul derision?

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,

When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200

For parting us,—O *me!* is all forgot?

All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,

190. *bare*] *bear* F 4. 194. *of me*] *to me* Johnson. 199. *sisters' vows*] *sisters' vows* Qq, Ff; *sister vows* Capell (Upton conj.); *sister-vows* Dyce (ed. 2). 201. *O me! is all*] Editor, *O, is all* Qq, F 1; *O, and is all* F 2, 3, 4; *O, is all now* Malone; *O, now is all* Reed; *O, is it all* Spedding conj.; *Oh! is this all* Keightley; *O, is all this* Hudson. 202. *school-days*] *school-day* Capell; *childhood*] *childhoods* F 3, 4. 203. *two artificial*] *to artificer* D. Wilson conj.

*Microcosmos*, 1605, p. 233, "which silver oes and spangles over-ran"; and Halliwell cites Bacon, *Essays*, xxxvii. *Of Masques and Triumphs*, "and oes, or spangs, as they are of no great cost, so are they of most glory." Of course Shakespeare puns on "o's" and "i's." "I do not take it that Shakespeare meant eyes as objects of vision, but bright shining eye-like lights." Craig.

201. *O me!*] The correction is amply justified by lines 272 and 282, *infra*. The metre of the line as it stands in the Qq and F 1 is certainly defective, and Marshall's explanation, that "the O is here a prolonged exclamation, and the hiatus in the metre is filled by the emotion of the actress," is as weak as Furness's idea that "the break in the

line gives ample pause for supplying a lost syllable." See Introduction.

202. *school-days' friendship*] Cf. a like reference in *Julius Caesar*, v. v. 26, "we two went" to school together."

203. *artificial*] one of the adjectives which have both an active and a passive meaning; but here used, as Walker (*Crit.* i. 96) points out, "with reference to the agent; *deabus artificibus similes*"—"for the worker in art, not the work." Hudson. Walker (*Crit.* i. 154), in his chapter on "Ovid's Influence on Shakespeare," suggests that there is in this passage an unconscious allusion to the story of Arachne and Minerva, which had impressed Shakespeare in reading.

Have with our neelds created both one flower,  
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, 205  
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key;  
 As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,  
 Had been incorporate. ( So we grew together,  
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
 But yet a union in partition; 210  
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem:  
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;  
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,

204. *Have . . . both*] *Created with our needles both* Pope; *neelds*] Rann, Malone (1790), Steevens (1793). 210. *yet*] omitted F 3, 4; a] F 1, 2, 3; an Qq, F 4. 211. *lovely*] *loving* Collier (ed. 2). 212. *So*] Or Hammer. 213. *first, like*] Theobald (Folkes conj.); *first life* Qq, F 1; *first life*, F 2, 3, 4.

204. *neelds*] so Shakespeare most probably wrote, instead of the "needles" of the Folio. But the word seems to have been pronounced by him as a monosyllable or a disyllable according to metric necessity. See, e.g., for the monosyllable, *Pericles*, iv. Gower 23; v. Gower 5 (if these lines are indeed Shakespeare's); *Cymbeline*, i. i. 168; *Lucrece*, 819; *King John*, v. ii. 157; *Richard II.* v. v. 17. Furness notes the disyllabic pronunciation in *Lucrece*, 317, "Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks."

211. *lovely*] Dyce thinks this may be equivalent to "loving," which latter is Collier's emendation. Cf. *Taming of the Shrew*, III. ii. 125, "And seal the title with a lovely kiss"; Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, p. 358, ed. Dyce, 1861, "and I will give thee many a 'lovely' kiss"; and Greene's *James IV.* p. 189, ed. Dyce, 1861:

"A father, brother, and a vowed friend

Link all these 'lovely' styles, good king, in one."

213. *Two of the first*] Douce, i. 194, says: "It may be doubted whether this passage has been rightly explained, and whether the commentators have not

given Shakespeare credit for more skill in heraldry than he really possessed, or at least than he intended to exhibit on the present occasion. Helena says, 'We had two seeming bodies, but only one heart. She then exemplifies her position by a simile—We had *two of the first, i.e. bodies*, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as *one person*, but which, like our *single heart*, have but *one crest*.'" Staunton goes somewhat further. He says: "The plain heraldical allusion is to the simple impalements of two armorial ensigns, as they are marshalled side by side to represent a marriage; and the expression, *Two of the first*, is to that particular form of dividing the shield being the first in order of the nine ordinary partitions of the Escutcheon. These principles were familiarly understood in the time of Shakespeare by all the readers of the many very popular heraldical works of the period, and an extract from one of these will probably render the meaning of the passage clear. In *The Accedence of Armorie*, published by Gerard Leigh in 1597, he says: 'Now will I declare to you of ix sundrie Partitions:—the *First whereof is a partition from the highest part of*

Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.  
 And will you rend our ancient love asunder, 215  
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?  
 It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:  
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it;  
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

*Her.* I am amazed at your passionate words: 220  
 I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

*Hel.* Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,  
 To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?  
 And made your other love, Demetrius,  
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot, 225  
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,  
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this  
 To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander  
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,  
 And tender me, forsooth, affection; 230  
 But by your setting on, by your consent?  
 What though I be not so in grace as you,  
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate;  
 But miserable most, to love unloved?

215. *rend*] Rowe; *rent* Qq, Ff. 218. *for it*] *for't* Walker conj. 220.  
*I am amazed at your passionate words*] Ff, *I am amazed at your words* Qq.

*the Escoccheon to the lowest. And though it must be blazed so, yet is it a joining together.* It is also a marriage, that is to say, *two coes*; the man's on the right side, and the woman's on the left: as it might be said that Argent had married with Gules.' In different words, this is nothing else than an amplification of Helena's own expression, 'seeming parted; But yet a union in partition.' The shield bearing the arms of two married persons would of course be surmounted by one crest only, as the text properly remarks, that

of the husband. In Shakespeare's day, the only pleas for bearing two crests were ancient usage, or a special grant. The modern practice of introducing a second crest by an heiress has been most improperly adopted from the German heraldical system; for it should be remembered, that as a female cannot wear a helmet, so neither can she bear a crest."

215. *rend*] There seems to be no sound reason for printing the old form "rent."

# ·1 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM 97

This you should pity, rather than despise. 235  
 I understand not what you mean by this.  
 Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,  
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;  
 Wink at each other; hold the sweet jest up:  
 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled. 240  
 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,  
 You would not make me such an argument.  
 But, fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;  
 Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.  
 Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse; 245  
 My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!  
 O excellent!

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.  
 Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:  
 Thy threats have no more strength than her weak  
 prayers.— 250

Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do;  
 I swear by that which I will lose for thee,  
 To prove him false that says I love thee not.  
 I say I love thee more than he can do.

*Ay, do, persever*] *I doe*. *Perseuer* Q 1; *I, do, perseuer* Q 2, Ff; *Ay, do,*  
*ve Rowe*. 238. *Make mouths*] *Make mows* Steevens (1793). 241.  
*ad Collier* (ed. 2). 243. *my*] Q 1; *mine* Q 2, Ff. 246. *my life*]  
 1; omitted F 2, 3, 4. 250. *prayers*] Theobald; *praise* Qq, Ff; *prays*  
 (Theobald conj.). 252. *lose*] *loose* Q 1.

*persever*] Shakespeare has  
 us examples of words with the  
 nearer the beginning than in  
 usage; and as to this word, cf.  
*Well*, III. vii. 37; *King John*,  
 1; and *Hamlet*, I. ii. 92.  
*mouths*] a common corruption  
 ows," grimaces. Cf. *Hamlet*,

iv. iv. 50, "Make mouths at the  
 invisible event."

239. *hold the sweet jest up*] Cf.  
*Merry Wives*, v. v. 109, "I pray you,  
 come, hold up the jest no higher"; and  
*Much Ado*, II. iii. 126, "He hath ta'en  
 the infection; hold it up."



*Lys.* If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too. 255

*Dem.* Quick, come!

*Her.* Lysander, whereto tends all this?

*Lys.* Away, you Ethiopel!

*Her.* No, no, he'll kill thee!

*Dem.* Seem to break loose; take on, as you would follow;

But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

*Lys.* Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose; 260

255. too] to Qq. 257. *Ethiope*] *Ethiope* you Heath conj. 257, 258. *Her.* No, no! he'll kill thee! *Dem.* Seem to break loose;] Editor; No, no: *haste* Seem to breake loose Q 1; No, no, hee'l seeme to breake loose [one line] Q 2; No, no, Sir, seem to breake loose [one line] Ff; No, no; he'll not come.—Seem to break loose Capell; No, no; he'll—sir, Seem to break loose Malone; No, no; sir:—he will Seem to break loose (Steevens (1793); No, no, sir; you Seem to break loose Dyce, ed. 2 (Lettsom conj.); No! no, sir; thou'lt Seem to break loose Kinnear; No, no; he'll but Seem to break loose Nicholson conj.; No, no, sir:—do; Seem to break loose Hudson. 260. off] of Q 1; burr] bur Qq, F 1; but F 2, 3, 4.

257. *Ethiope*] Hermia was evidently a brunette, like Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost*. See iv. iii. 268 of that play (in which the king compares her to an Ethiopel), "And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack," i.e. boast.

257, 258. No, no! . . . loose] This obscure and corrupt passage has given rise to much comment and conjecture. The Cambridge editors are of opinion, rightly I think, that some words have fallen out of the text; and the text, as above arranged, seems the simplest and most probable solution of the difficulty. Following on the challenge of Lysander in line 255 and the quick retort of Demetrius, we have Hermia's wondering question, "Whereto tends all this?" (accompanied by the act of clinging to Lysander, so as to prevent the meeting of the rivals). Next comes Lysander's rough reply, "Away, you Ethiopel!" and his unsuccessful attempt to thrust her aside. The words, "No, no! he'll [kill thee]" constitute Hermia's very natural and probable reply to her repulse by Lysander. After Hermia's intervention Demetrius resumes his interrupted taunt against

Lysander. It is clear that one syllable at least, if not a foot, has fallen out of line 257, and the word "kill" seems to me far the most probable, and for two reasons chiefly: (1) it is nearer than any other word to the sound of "he'll," if the compositor of Q 1 worked from dictation, and, if he worked from a MS., to the trace of its letters; in either case being inadvertently omitted; and (2), and this is the weightier reason, as an exclamation from Hermia. It is the natural result of the antecedent passage between her and Demetrius, namely, lines 43-70 of this very scene, in which Hermia believes that her lover has been killed by Demetrius, who had already avowed to her his intention of killing Lysander. See, especially, lines 43 (slain), 56 (murdered), 66 (slain), and particularly 70 (kill'd). If the speech of Hermia was originally, as I believe, by the mistake of the printer of Q 1 wrongly assigned to Demetrius, then the "Sir" of the Folio would appear to be merely a rude and unsuccessful attempt to account for and remedy a mistake the origin of which was misunderstood.

Or I will shake thee from me, like a serpent.

*Her.* Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,  
Sweet love?

*Lys.* Thy love? out, tawny Tartar, out!

Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

*Her.* Do you not jest?

*Hel.* Yes, sooth; and so do you. 265

*Lys.* Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

*Dem.* I would I had your bond; for I perceive

A weak bond holds you; I'll not trust your word.

*Lys.* What? should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?

Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270

*Her.* What, can you do me greater harm than hate?

Hate me! wherefore? O me! what means my love?

264. *hated*] Pope, *hated* Qq, *O hated* Ff; *potion*] Q 1; *poison* Q 2, Ff.  
271. *What . . . harm*] *What greater harm can you do me* Hammer; *hate*] *harm*  
F 4. 272. *means*] Collier (ed. 2, 3), Singer (ed. 2), Keightley, Marshall.

263. *tawny*] another reference to Hermia's brown complexion.

268. *weak bond*] Hermia's arms still clinging round Lysander.

269. *What?*] the interrogative seems the preferable punctuation.

272. *wherefore?*] accented as in *Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii. 62, "tell me, and wherefore?"

272. *means*] I have no hesitation in adopting what Marshall calls "the very sensible emendation of the Collier MS." for the "newes" of the Qq, Ff. Marshall (*Irving Shakespeare*, vol. ii. 380) says: "I cannot find a single instance in which it" [*i.e.* the phrase "What news?" or "What news with you"] "is not addressed to some person who has only just appeared on the scene, and who may be expected by the speaker to have some message or matter of importance to communicate. . . . But Hermia in this speech is under the influence of strong emotion. She is shocked at Lysander saying that

he hates her. Is it likely, under such circumstances, that she would employ such a colloquial phrase as 'What news'? Were she less in earnest, less deeply wounded, and playing the part of an indignant coquette, whose philanderings had been discovered, she might say, 'What new-fangled notion is this of your hating me?' But she is too much in earnest to play with words. The exclamation 'oh me!' is not one of skittish and affected suspense; it is a cry of real mental anguish; and I cannot think anyone with a due sense of dramatic fitness would admit the reading 'What news?' in the sense accepted by all the commentators." Strong confirmation of the change to "means" is to be found in line 236, *ante*, where Hermia uses the exact word in reference to Helena's accusation of Hermia's "setting Lysander to follow" her. Grant White (ed. 1) considers "that as this is Hermia's first interview with her lover since

Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?  
 I am as fair now as I was erewhile.  
 Since night you loved me; yet since night you left  
 me: 275

Why, then you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—  
 In earnest, shall I say?

*Lys.* Ay, by my life;  
 And never did desire to see thee more.  
 Therefore, be out of hope, of question, doubt,  
 Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest, 280  
 That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

*Her.* O me, you juggler! you canker-blossom!  
 You thief of love! what, have you come by night  
 And stol'n my love's heart from him?

*Hel.* Fine, i' faith!  
 Have you no modesty, no maiden shame, 285  
 No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear  
 Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?  
 Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet you!  
*Her.* Puppet! why so? Ay, that way goes the game.  
 Now I perceive that she hath made compare 290

279. *doubt*] Pope; of *doubt* Qq, Ff. 282. *juggler! you*] *jugler*, *Oh you*  
 Pope; *jugler, you!* you Capell. 289. *why so?*] Qq, Ff; *why, so*: Theobald.

Puck's application of the flower to his eyes, she may well express surprise at the novelty of his declaration that he hates her." But surely this expression is brought out much more strongly by "means." Furness, *more suo*, "doggedly shuts his eyes to the substitution."

279. *doubt*] In support of Pope's omission of "of," Lettsom (*ap.* Dyce) aptly cites II. i. 238, "Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field."

282. *juggler*] This word must be

pronounced as a trisyllable. It was clearly so in Chaucer's time. See his *House of Fame*, iii. 169:

"Ther saugh I pley  
 Ingelours magiciens and tregetours,"  
 282. *canker-blossom*] Capell is undoubtedly right in considering the first word of this compound to be a verb, *i.e.* "you who canker the blossom," meaning that Helena has stealthily destroyed the blossom of Lysander's affection for herself. See II. ii. 4, *ante*.

Between our statures, she hath urged her height;  
 And with her personage, her tall personage,  
 Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.—  
 And are you grown so high in his esteem,  
 Because I am so dwarfish and so low? 295  
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;  
 How low am I? I am not yet so low,  
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

*Hel.* I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,  
 Let her not hurt me: I was never curst; 300  
 I have no gift at all in shrewishness;  
 I am a right maid for my cowardice;  
 Let her not strike me. You, perhaps, may think,  
 Because she is something lower than myself,  
 That I can match her.

*Her.* Lower! hark, again. 305

*Hel.* Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.

292. *tall personage*] *tall parsonage* Q 2. 299. *gentlemen*] *gentleman* Q R.  
 304. *she is*] Qq, F 1, 2, 3; *she's* F 4.

292. *And . . . personage*] There is no particular difficulty in the scansion of this line; nor is there any reason for special emphasis on the word "tall."

296. *painted maypole*] The epithet may refer to the pink and white complexion of Helena. Painted maypoles were of great antiquity. Steevens quotes Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583: "These Oxen drawe home this May-pole (this stinking Ydol, rather), which is covered all ouer with floures and hearbs, bound round about with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometime painted with variable colours."

300. *curst*] shrewish, cross-grained, ill-tempered. Cotgrave: "Meschant. Wicked, impious, vngracious . . . also curst, mischievous, harsh, forward." Cf. line 341 of this scene, "Nor longer

stay in your curst company"; line 439, "Here she comes, curst and sad"; and numerous other passages in the plays, particularly *Taming of the Shrew*. See also line 323, *post*, "keen and shrewd." Craig quotes from North's *Plutarch*, ed. 2, 1595, p. 1087 (Aratus): "he reported that the place was not unscaleable, but very hard to come to it, because of certaine little curst cures a gardiner kept hard by the wall, which would never leave barking."

302. *right*] true, down-right. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. ii. 103, "It is the right butter-women's rank to market"; IV. iii. 88, where the true reading is "like a right forester"; and *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xii. 28, "like a right gipsy."

I evermore did love you, Hermia,  
 Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you ;  
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius,  
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood : 310  
 He follow'd you ; for love, I follow'd him.  
 But he hath chid me hence ; and threaten'd me  
 To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too :  
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,  
 To Athens will I bear my folly back, 315  
 And follow you no further : let me go :  
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

*Her.* Why, get you gone : who is 't that hinders you ?

*Hel.* A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

*Her.* What, with Lysander ?

*Hel.* With Demetrius. 320

*Lys.* Be not afraid : she shall not harm thee, Helena.

*Dem.* No, Sir ; she shall not, though you take her part.

*Hel.* O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd :

She was a vixen when she went to school ;

And, though she be but little, she is fierce. 325

*Her.* Little again ? nothing but low and little !

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus ?

Let me come to her.

*Lys.* Get you gone, you dwarf ;

You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made ;

311. *follow'd*] Rowe ; *followed* Qq, Ff. 313. *too*] *to* Qq. 320. *Hel.*] *Her.*  
 F 1, 2. 321. *shall*] *will* F 4 ; *Helena*] *Helena* Dyce (ed. 2), (Walker conj.).  
 323. *she's*] *she is* Q 1. 329. *You minimus*] *You mination you* Theobald (ed. 2).

314. *so*] See i. i. 39.

317. *fond*] foolish, as in many passages in Shakespeare.

321. *Helena*] See ii. ii. 104.

324. *when she went to school*] Cf.

*Julius Caesar*, i. ii. 300, "He was quick mettle when he went to school."

329. *minimus*] "a being of the least size." Johnson. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii. 482, "minims of nature."

You bead, you acorn.

*Dem.* You are too officious 330

In her behalf, that scorns your services.

Let her alone; speak not of Helena;

Take not her part: for if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,

Thou shalt aby it.

*Lys.* Now she holds me not; 335

Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,

Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

*Dem.* Follow? nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

[*Exeunt Lys. and Dem.*]

*Her.* You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:'

335. *aby*] Q 1, *abie* Q 2, *abide* Ff.  
Of mine or thine Malone conj. [Exit] Q 2.  
Pope; Exit . . . Ff; omitted Qq.

337. *Of*] Or Theobald; *Of* . . . mine]  
338. [*Exeunt* . . .] *Exe.* . . .  
339. 'long' Capell; long Qq, Ff.

"It came into use probably from the musical term 'minim,' which in the very old notation was the shortest note, though now one of the longest." Nares.

329. *hinder* knot-grass] "It appears," says Steevens, "that knot-grass was anciently supposed to prevent the growth of any animal or child." And he quotes Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (II. ii. 157, Dyce): "Should they put him into a straight pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass; he would never grow after it"; and their *Coxcomb* (II. ii. 150, Dyce): "We want a boy extremely for this function, Kept under for a year with milk and knot-grass." Beisly, *Shakespeare's Garden* (1864), 53, seems to be mistaken in thinking that "the allusion here made is to the 'character' of the plant as hindering the growth of useful plants; as it spreads in thick masses, and is very tough and deep-rooted." Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare* (1878), 101, says: "The *Polygonum aviculare*, a British weed, low strag-

gling and many-jointed, hence its name of knot-grass. There may be another explanation of hindering than that given by Steevens. Johnstone tells us that in the North, being difficult to cut in the harvest-time, or to pull in the process of weeding, it has obtained the soubriquet of the Deil's-lingels. From this it may well be called 'hinder', just as the *Ononis*, from the same habit of catching the plough and harrow, has obtained the prettier name of Rest-harrow."

333. *intend*] here, probably, to set forth, exhibit; or, to pretend, as in *Much Ado*, II. ii. 35, "Intend a kind of zeal," and other passages.

335. *aby*] See line 175, *supra*.

337. *Of*] See, for a similar construction, *The Tempest*, II. i. 27, "Which, of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow?"

339. *coil*] stir, tumult, turmoil, as in numerous other passages of Shakespeare.

339. 'long' owing to you, as in *Cymbeline*, v. v. 271, "and 'long of her it was."

Nay, go not back.

*Hel.* I will not trust you, I, 340

Nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;

My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*

*Her.* I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*

*Obe.* This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st, 345

Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

*Puck.* Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man

By the Athenian garments he had on?

And so far blameless proves my enterprise, 350

That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes:

And so far am I glad it so did sort,

As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

*Obe.* Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night; 355

The starry welkin cover thou anon

With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;

And lead these testy rivals so astray,

As one come not within another's way.

340. *you, I, you* Rowe (ed. 1). 343. [*Exit*] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff; Exeunt Rowe; Exeunt Herm. pursuing Helena Theobald. 344. *Her.* . . . say] omitted Ff. [*Exit*] Capell; Exeunt Qq; Exit pursuing Helena Malone. 345. *Scene IX.*] Pope; *Scene VIII.* Warburton. Enter Oberon and Puck Ff. 346. *wilfully*] Qq, *willingly* Ff. 349. *had*] Q 1; *hath* Q 2, Ff. 351. *'nointed*] *nointed* Qq, Ff. 352. *so did*] *did so* Rowe. 357. *fog*] *fogs* Theobald (ed. 2).

344.] This line was accidentally omitted in Ff, and hence no *exit* is provided for Hermia or Helena.

353. *As*] *i.e.* since, because.

357. *Acheron*] In classical mythology, the infernal river, perhaps used loosely by Shakespeare and other early poets for river or lake. See *Titus* *Andronicus*, iv. iii. 44, "I'll dive into the burning lake below, And pull her out of Acheron by the heels" (if this is in fact Shakespeare's authorship); and *Macbeth*, iii. v. 15, "at the pit of Acheron." But the comparison Shakespeare here makes is in respect of "blackness."

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue, 360  
 Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;  
 And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;  
 And from each other look thou lead them thus,  
 Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
 With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep: 365  
 Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;  
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,  
 To take from thence all error, with his might,  
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.  
 When they next wake, all this derision 370  
 Shall seem a dream, and fruitless vision;  
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,  
 With league whose date till death shall never  
 end.

Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,  
 I'll to my queen, and beg her Indian boy; 375  
 And then I will her charmed eye release  
 From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

*Puck.* My fairy lord, this must be done with haste;  
 For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger; 380

364. *death-counterfeiting*] (with comma) Q 2, F 1; *death-counterfeiting*, Q 1.  
 368. *his*] *is* Rowe. 374. *employ*] *employ* Q 1, F 4; *apply* Q 2; *imply*  
 F 1, 2, 3. 379. *night's swift*] *nights swift* Q 1; *night swift* Q 2; *night-swift*  
 F 1; *nights-swift* F 2, 3, 4.

367. *virtuous*] powerful, efficacious.  
 So, in the legal language of conveyancing even at the present day, "under and by virtue of every power, etc."

379. *dragons*] Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, v. viii. 17, "The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth"; and *Cymbeline*, II. ii. 48, "Swift, swift, you dragons of the night." Steevens says:

"The task of drawing the chariot of the night was assigned to dragons on account of their supposed watchfulness." Malone refers to Golding's *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, "And brought asleep the dragon fell, whose eyes were never shet." For "cut the clouds," cf. *Tempest*, IV. i. 93, of Venus "cutting the clouds towards Paphos."



At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,

Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,

That in cross-ways and floods have burial,

Already to their wormy beds are gone;

For fear lest day should look their shames upon, 385

They wilfully themselves exile from light,

And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

*Obe.* But we are spirits of another sort:

I with the morning's love have oft made sport:

And, like a forester, the groves may tread, 390

Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,

386. *themselves exile*] *exile themselves* F 3, 4; *exil'd themselves* Theobald conj. [beginning Oberon's speech here]. 387. *black-brow'd*] *black browed* Q 1.

389. *morning's love*] Qq, F 1; *morning love* F 2, 3, 4; *morning-love* Rowe (ed. 1); *morning-light* Rowe (ed. 2).

382, 383. *damned spirits . . . burial*] Steevens says: "The ghosts of self-murderers, who are buried in cross-roads, and of those who, being drowned, were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies." That the waters were sometimes the place of residence for "damned spirits" we learn from the ancient bl. l. [black letter] romance of *Syr Eglamour of Artoys* (no date): "Let some preest a gospel saye, For doute of fendes in the flode."

386.] It was distinctly ingenious of Theobald to propose to begin Oberon's speech here.

387. *black-brow'd*] Cf. *King John*, v. vi. 17, "Here walk I in the black brow of night"; and *Romeo and Juliet*, III. ii. 20, "Come, loving, black-brow'd night."

389. *the morning's love*] It is highly probable that Cephalus, the lover of Aurora (Milton's "Attic boy," *Il*

*Penseroso*, 124), is here intended, especially having regard to Bottom's reference to "Shafalus" in v. i. 198. This shows at least that the myth was in Shakespeare's mind. So in *The Phoenix Nest*, 1593:

"Aurora now began to rise againe  
From watric couch and from old  
Tithon's side,  
In hope to kisse upon Acteian  
plaine  
Yong Cephalus."

Capell suggests that the expression may mean the star Phosphorus; Steevens that it is Tithonus, the husband of Aurora. Halliwell, aptly remarks: "Oberon merely means to say metaphorically that he has sported with Aurora, the morning's love, the first blush of morning; and that he is not, like a ghost, compelled to vanish at the dawn of day."

391. *eastern gate*] Milton's *L'Allegro*, 59, is well known:

"Right against the eastern gate,  
Where the great Sun begins his  
state."

Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.  
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:

We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.* 395

*Puck.* Up and down, up and down,  
I will lead them up and down:  
I am fear'd in field and town;  
Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one. 400

*Re-enter* LYSANDER.

*Lys.* Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

*Puck.* Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

*Lys.* I will be with thee straight.

*Puck.* Follow me, then,  
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lys. as following the voice.*

*Re-enter* DEMETRIUS.

*Dem.* Lysander! speak again.

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled? 405

392. *Neptune with . . . beams*] Qq, Ff; *Neptune, with . . . beams*, Walker conj.; *fair blessed*] *far-blessing* Hanmer (Warburton). 395. [*Exit*] *Exit* Oberon Rowe; omitted Qq, Ff. 396-399. *Up . . . down*] as in Pope [two lines Q 1; prose Q 2, Ff]. 396. *down, down then*, Hanmer. 399. *Goblin . . . down*] Oberon, Collier conj. (omitting *Exit* in 395). 400, 404. *Re-enter . . .*] Capell; *Enter . . .* Qq, Ff. 401. *Where . . . now*] Qq [two lines Ff]. 403, 404. *Follow . . . ground*] as in Theobald [one line Qq, Ff]. 404. [*Exit . . . voice*] *Exit* Lys. . . voice, which seems to go off Capell; Lys. goes out, as following Dem. Theobald; omitted Qq, Ff.

392.] The punctuation of Walker (*Crit.* iii. 49) is noteworthy. Cf. *Sonnets*, xxxiii., "Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy."

399.] This line might belong to Oberon if he remains on the stage. His *exit*, if at line 395, is not marked in the Qq, Ff. If Puck is the speaker, possibly "I" is understood

before "Goblin," unless "will" is understood after it. There is much, however, to be said for Staunton's idea that the line is none other than a self-conferred nickname on Robin Goodfellow, to indicate his will-o'-the-wisp propensities, and that the line should be read, "Goblin-lead-them-up-and-down." 402. *drawn*] i.e. with sword drawn.

Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

*Puck.* Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,  
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,  
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;  
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled 410  
That draws a sword on thee.

*Dem.* Yea; art thou there?

*Puck.* Follow my voice; we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt.*

*Re-enter* LYSANDER.

*Lys.* He goes before me, and still dares me on;  
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.  
The villain is much lighter heel'd than I: 415  
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;  
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,  
And here will rest me. Come, thou gentle day!

[*Lies down.*

For if but once thou shew me thy grey light,  
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. 420

[*Sleeps.*

*Re-enter* PUCK and DEMETRIUS.

*Puck.* Ho, ho! ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

406. *Speak! In some bush?* Capell; *Speake in some bush.* Qq; *Speake in some bush:* Ff. 407. *bragging*] *begging* F 3, 4. 412. [*Exeunt*] Qq, *Exit* Ff. *Re-enter . . .*] Capell; Lysander comes back Theobald; omitted Qq, Ff. 414. *calls, then he is*] *calles, then he is* Q 1; *calles, then he's* Q 2; *calls, then he's* F 1; *calls me, then he's* F 2, 3, 4. 416. *follow'd*] Rowe; *followed* Qq, Ff; [*Shifting places*] Ff. 418. [*Lies down*] *lye down* Ff; omitted Qq. 420. [*Sleeps*] Capell. *Re-enter . . .*] Capell; Enter Robin Ff; Robin and Demetrius Q 1. 421. *Ho, . . . ho!*] Capell; *why*] *why* then Hanmer.

421. *Ho, ho! ho, ho!*] the established (*Remarks*, 1783), gives numerous instances of the old songs which describe the frolics of Robin Good-fellow. one of the leading characters in the Ritson, in his note on this passage old miracle plays and moralities, ex-

*Dem.* Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot,  
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,  
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.  
Where art thou now?

*Puck.* Come hither; I am here. 425

*Dem.* Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this  
dear,

If ever I thy face by daylight see:  
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me  
To measure out my length on this cold bed.  
By day's approach look to be visited. 430  
[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

*Re-enter HELENA.*

*Hel.* O weary night, O long and tedious night,  
Abate thy hours! shine, comforts, from the east;  
That I may back to Athens, by daylight,  
From these that my poor company detest:

425. *now*] Q 1; omitted Q 2, Ff. 426. *shalt*] *shat* Q 1; *buy*] Qq, Ff; *by* Collier (Johnson conj.). 429. [*Lies down*] Capell. 430. [*Lies . . .*] Malone; *Lyes down* Rowe; *Sleeps* Capell. *Re-enter . . .*] Dyce; *Enter . . .* Qq, Ff; *Enter Helena and throws herself down* Capell. 431. *Scene x.*] Pope. 432. *shine, comforts,*] Theobald; *shine comforts,* Q 1; *shine comforts* Q 2, Ff.

pressing his fiendish laughter in this form; e.g. in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, "But Diccon, Diccon, did not the devil cry ho, ho, ho?"

426. *buy this dear*] "Johnson conjectured 'by' for 'aby,' as in lines 175, 335, but the phrase, if a corruption, was so well established in Shakespeare's time as to make a change unnecessary. Compare, for instance, *1 Henry IV.* v. iii. 7:

'The Lord of Stafford dear to day  
hath bought  
Thy likeness';  
and *3 Henry VI.* ii. i. 100, 'Too

true; and bought his climbing very dear.' Besides the two words are etymologically connected." Wright.

429. *measure . . . length*] Cf. *King Lear*, i. iv. 99, "If you will measure your lubber's length again."

432. *shine, comforts,*] Theobald's punctuation seems preferable, i.e. making "comforts" a vocative, like "night."

434. *detest*] Walker (*Crit.* ii. 311) says: "In writers of [Shakespeare's] age 'detest' is used in the sense which, as then, it still retained from its original 'detestari,' being indicative

And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's  
eye, 435

Steal me a while from mine own company.

*[Lies down and sleeps.]*

*Puck.* Yet but three? Come one more;  
Two of both kinds makes up four.  
Here she comes, curst and sad:  
Cupid is a knavish lad, 440  
Thus to make poor females mad.

*Re-enter HERMIA.*

*Her.* Never so weary, never so in woe;  
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;  
I can no further crawl, no further go;  
My legs can keep no pace with my desires. 445  
Here will I rest me till the break of day.  
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

*[Lies down and sleeps.]*

*Puck.* On the ground,  
Sleep sound:

435. *sometimes*] Qq, F 3, 4; *sometime* F 1, 2. 436. [*Lies . . .*] Dyce; Sleepe Qq, Ff; Sleeps Rowe. 437. *three?* *three here?* Hanmer; *Come one* Qq, Ff; *Come but one* Editor conj. 438. *makes*] Qq, F 1, 2, 4; *make* F 3. 439. *comes*] *cometh* Hanmer, Editor conj. 441. *Re-enter . . .*] Dyce; *Enter* H. F 3, 4; *Enter* H. [after 440] F 1, 2. 446. *me*] *me*, [*lies down*] Capell. 447. *Heavens*] *Heaven* Anon. conj. [*Lies . . .*] Dyce; *Lyes down* Rowe; omitted Qq, Ff. 448. [*To Lysander, whose Eyes he anoints*] Capell. 448-457. *On . . . eye*] as in Warburton; four lines in Qq, Ff. 449. *Sleep*] *Sleep* thou Hanmer.

of something spoken, not of an affection of the mind; compare 'attest,' 'protest,' which still retain their etymological meaning." Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Book ii. [xxiii. 47, p. 248, ed. Aldis Wright], speaking of secrecy in matters of government, "Again, the wisdom of antiquity . . .

in the description of torments and pains . . . doth detest the offence of facility." ["facilitie" in the edition of 1605 is corrected to "futilitie" in the Errata, and the correction is adopted in edd. 1629, 1633. See Wright's note.]

I'll apply 450  
 To your eye,  
 Gentle lover, remedy.

[Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eye.

When thou wakest,  
 Thou takest  
 True delight 455  
 In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye:  
 And the country proverb known,  
 That every man should take his own,  
 In your waking shall be shown: 460

Jack shall have Jill;  
 Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be  
 well. [Exit.

451. *To your eye*] Rowe; *your eye* Qq, Ff. 452. [Squeezing . . .] Rowe.  
 453. *wakest*] *wakest next* Hanmer. 454. *Thou*] *Then thou* Seymour conj.;  
*See thou* Collier (ed. 2) (Tyrwhitt conj.); *takest*] Qq, F 1, 4; *take'st* F 2, 3.  
 461, 462. *Jack . . . ill*] as in Johnson [one line Qq, Ff]. 463. *well*] *still*  
 Steevens conj. [They sleepe all the Act] Ff.

450. *apply to*] The Qq, Ff omit "to," but in almost every other passage in which the word occurs it is used with "to." It is used with "in" in *As You Like It*, II. iii. 48, "I never did apply Hot and rebellious liquors 'in' my blood."

461. *Jack shall have Jill*] Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 884:

"Our wooing doth not end like an old play;

Jack hath not Jill."

Steevens says the proverb is to be found in Heywood's *Epigrammes upon Proverbs*, 1567:

"All shalbe well, Iacke shall haue Gill:

Nay, nay, Gill is wedded to Wyll."

And Staunton cites instances from

Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (Dyce's ed., i. 234) and elsewhere. In *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. i. 51, there is a play on the words jacks and jills, which there signify two drinking measures, as well as men-servants and maid-servants.

463. *The man . . . be well*] probably another proverbial expression. Wright compares Fletcher's *Chances*, III. iv.:

"Fred. How now? How goes it?

John. Why, the man has his mare again, and all's well, Frederic."

And see Ray's *English Proverbs*, "All is well, and the man hath his mare again." The stage-direction of the Folio seems to imply that the sleepers continue to sleep up to line 135 of Act IV. sc. i.

## ACT IV

SCENE I.—*The Same.*

*Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia, lying  
asleep.*

*Enter* TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB,  
MOTE, MUSTARD-SEED, and other Fairies attending;  
OBERON behind unseen.

*Tita.* Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,  
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

*Bot.* Where's Peaseblossom? 5

*Peas.* Ready.

*Bot.* Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Moun-  
sieur Cobweb?

*Cob.* Ready.

*Act IV. Scene 1.* Rowe. Actus Quartus Ff; omitted Qq. The Same . . .] The Same. The Lovers, at a Distance, asleep, Capell. The Wood Pope. Enter . . .] Enter Queene of Faieries, and Clowne, and Faieries: and the King behinde them Qq, Ff. 1. [seating him on a Bank] Capell. 7, 8. *Monsieur* Qq, Ff; *monsieur* Rowe.

*Act IV.* Johnson says: "I see no reason why the Fourth Act should begin here, when there seems no interruption of the action." But Furness aptly remarks: "It is precisely because there is so little 'interruption of the action' that it is necessary to have an interruption of time, which this division supplies. At the close of the last scene the stage is pitch-dark, doubly black through Puck's charms, and a change to daylight is rendered less violent by a new Act."

2. *coy.*] caress. See Golding's *Ovid*,

vii. (p. 82, ed. 1567), "Their dangling Dewlaps with his hand he coyde vnfearefully"; Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, III. i. (ed. Dyce):

"Lo, yonder comes the lovely nymph,  
that in these Ida vales  
Plays with Amyntas' lusty boy, and  
coys him in the dales!"

and Warner's *Albion's England*, vi. 30 (ed. 1602), "and whilst she coydes his sooty cheekes, or curles his sweaty top."

4. *my gentle joy*] Cf. II. i. 27, "makes him [the changeling] all her joy."

*Bot.* Mounsieur Cobweb; good mounsieur, get your 10  
 weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped  
 humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good  
 mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not  
 fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur;  
 and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey- 15  
 bag break not; I would be loth to have you  
 overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's  
 mounsieur Mustard-seed?

*Mus.* Ready.

*Bot.* Give me your neaf, mounsieur Mustard-seed. 20  
 Pray you, leave your courtesy, good moun-  
 sieur.

*Mus.* What's your will?

*Bot.* Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery 25  
 Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's,  
 mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy  
 about the face: and I am such a tender ass, if  
 my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

*Tita.* What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet  
 love?

10. *get your*] Q 1; *get* Q 2, Ff. 17. *overflown*] *overflow'd* Malone conj.  
 20. *your*] *thy* Pope; *neaf*] *neafe* Qq, F 1; *newfs* F 2; *newse* F 3; *news* F 4.  
*Mustard-seed*] Qq, F 1, 2; *Mustard* F 2, 4. 21. *courtesy*] *curtsie* Q 1; *courtesie*  
 Q 2, F 1, 2; *curtsie* F 3, 4. 24. *Cavalery*] Qq, F 1; *cavalero* F 2, 3, 4.  
 25. *Cobweb*] *Peaseblossom* Rann (Anon. *ap.* Grey conj.). 26. *marvellous*]  
*marvailous* Q 1; *marvailous* Q 2; *marvels* Capell. 28. *do*] *doth* Rowe (ed. 2).  
 29. *some*] *some some* Q 2.

20. *neaf*] *fist*; Icel. *knafi*. Cf. *Henry IV.* II. iv. 200, "Sweet knight,  
 I kiss thy neif."

21. *leave your courtesy*] *i.e.* dispense  
 with compliment, put on your hat. Cf.  
*Love's Labour's Lost*, v. i. 103, "re-  
 member thy courtesy; I beseech thee,  
 apparel thy head."

24, 25. *Cavalery Cobweb*] Cobweb here  
 is probably a mistake for Peaseblossom,  
 as Cobweb had already been dispatched  
 against the humble-bee; unless indeed  
 we are to suppose that Bottom is in fact  
 addressing Peaseblossom, but gives him  
 the wrong name.



*Bot.* I have a reasonable good ear in music: let's 30  
have the tongs and the bones.

*Tita.* Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

*Bot.* Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch  
your good dry oats. Methinks, I have a great  
desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, 35  
hath no fellow.

*Tita.* I have a venturous fairy that shall seek  
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee newest nuts.

30. *Let's*] *Lets* Q 1; *Let us* Q 2, Ff. 31. *tongs*] *tongues* F 2. Musicke  
Tongs, Rurall Musicke] Ff; omitted Qq. 37, 38.] as in Hanmer; Q 1 has two  
lines, ending *hoord* and *nuts*; Q 2, Ff three lines, ending *Fairy, hoard, nuts*.  
38. *thee*] *thee thence* Hanmer, *thee the* Walker conj., *for thee* Collier conj.;  
*newest*] Kinnear conj., *newe* Qq, *new* Ff, *mellow* Craig conj.

31. *the tongs and the bones*] "The music of the tongs was produced, I believe, by striking them with a key, while the bones were played upon by rattling them between the fingers." Dyce.

31. Musicke Tongs, Rurall Musicke] "This scenical direction," says Capell, "is certainly an interpolation of the players, as no such direction appears in either Quarto, and Titania's reply is a clear exclusion of it."

32. *Or say . . . eat*] This line is printed as prose in the Globe and Cambridge editions, wrongly so I think, as all Titania's speeches are in verse. Marshall remarks that "*desirest* is not elided in F 1; but it is almost certain this line was intended for verse, the non-elision being accidental."

35. *bottle of hay*] "bottle" is the diminutive of the French *botte*, a bundle, of hay, flax, etc. Halliwell says "a bottle of hay was not a mere 'bundle,' but some measure of provender . . . In a court-book dated 1551, the halfpenny bottle of hay is stated to weigh two pounds and a half, and the penny bottle five pounds." Cotgrave, "Boteler. To bottle, or bundle up; to make into bottles, or bundles." Cf. Chaucer, *Man-*

*ciple's Tale*, Words of the Pilgrims, line 14, "Although it be nat worth a botel hey"; and the common proverb, "to look for a needle in a bottle of hay." The phrase "a bottle of straw," as Craig remarks, is in common use in the north of Ireland. See *Eng. Dial. Dict.*, s.v.

36. *no fellow*] Cf. *Julius Caesar*, III. i. 62, "There is no fellow in the firmament."

38. *newest*] the conjecture of Kinnear. Titania, in her desire to gratify Bottom, would naturally seek to bribe him with the newest and freshest nuts. A syllable *must* have dropped out of the line; and on account of the similarity between "thee" and "thence" there is much to be said for the reading of Hanmer; but the addition of "thence" adds nothing to the meaning, and has the effect of removing all stress from the adjective,—a distinct loss. It is possible, not to say probable, that, having regard to the spelling of the Qq, *i.e.* "newe," the final letters of "newest" (-st) may have been omitted in the Qq from confusion with the final letters of "nuts" (-ts). In any case, Shakespeare uses the superlative form half a dozen times, *e.g.* *Tempest*, II. ii. 28, "the newest poor-John."

*Bot.* I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.

But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; 40

I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

*Tita.* Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.

Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

[*Exeunt Fairies.*]

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist; the female ivy so 45

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

43. *all ways*] Theobald; *alwaies* Qq, F 1; *alwaies* F 2, 3; *always* F 4; *a while* Hamner; *away*] & *th' way* Heath conj. [*Exeunt* . . .] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff. 44, 45. *woodbine* . . . *entwist*;] *woodbine*, . . . *Honisuckle*, . . . *entwist*: Q 1; *woodbine*, . . . *Honisuckle*, . . . *entwist*; Q 2, Ff; *woodbine*] *weedbind* Steevens conj. 45. *entwist*; *the female*] *entwist the maple*; Theobald (Warburton conj.). 45, 46. *entwist*; . . . *Enrings*] *entwist*, . . . *Enring*, Capell.

43. *all ways*] i.e. as Theobald says, "disperse yourselves that danger approach us from no quarter."

44, 45. *woodbine* . . . *entwist*] The general idea here meant to be conveyed is clear enough; the difficulty lies in ascertaining exactly what plant Shakespeare meant by "woodbine." It is used by him in only two other passages, namely, in II. i. 251 of this play, "Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine," where it must mean "honeysuckle"; and in *Much Ado*, III. i. 30, of Beatrice, "couched in the woodbine coverture," obviously referring to line 7 of that scene:

"the pleached bower,

Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun,

Forbid the sun to enter."

Steevens supposed that "the sweet honeysuckle" is in opposition to "woodbine," and that "entwist," as well as "enrings," governs the "barky fingers of the elm." The alternative, and only satisfactory, solution is to take woodbine as a different plant from honeysuckle. Gifford, in his note on the passage in Ben Jonson's *Vision of Delight*, a Masque, 1617 (Works, vii. 308)—

"behold!

How the blue bindweed doth itself infold

With honey-suckle, and both these intwine

Themselves with bryony and jessamine"—

says: "This passage settles the meaning of the speech of Titania in a *Midsummer-Night's Dream* . . . The woodbine of Shakespeare is the blue bindweed of Jonson; in many of our counties the woodbine is still the name for the great convolvulus." As bindweed is the popular name for the convolvulus, notwithstanding that it is also used of other climbing plants, e.g. smilax, bitter sweet, ivy, etc., it is probable that by the "blue bindweed" Jonson meant the common purple (or blue) convolvulus. See Gerard, *Herball* (1597), 864. "On the whole," says Marshall, "considering the lax use of the word 'woodbine,' we must take it to mean some other plant than the honeysuckle, probably the *Convolvulus sepium*." See Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*, 1896, p. 131.

45. *female ivy*] So Catullus, 62. 54, of the vine, "ulmo conjuncta marito."

O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

[*They sleep.*]

*Enter* PUCK.

*Obe.* [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity:

For meeting her of late, behind the wood, 50

Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,

I did upbraid her and fall out with her:

For she his hairy temples then had rounded

With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;

And that same dew, which sometime on the buds 55

Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,

Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,

Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.

When I had at my pleasure taunted her,

And she, in mild terms, begg'd my patience, 60

I then did ask of her her changeling child;

Which straight she gave me, and her fairies sent

47. [*They sleep*] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff. *Enter* Puck Rowe; *Enter* Robin Goodfellow Qq; *Enter* Robin Goodfellow and Oberon Ff; Oberon advances. *Enter* Puck] Capell. 48. [*Advancing*] Collier; as in Qq; two lines Ff. 51. *favours*] Q 1; *favours* F 4; *sauors* Q 2, F 1; *savors* F 2, 3. 57. *flowerets*] *flouriets* Qq, Ff; *flouret's* Johnson; *flourets* Steevens (1793). 62. *fairies*] Dyce; *fairy* Qq, Ff.

Wright compares Fairfax's *Tasso*, iii. 75, "The married Elme fell with his fruitfull vine." See also *Comedy of Errors*, II. ii. 176, "Thou art an elm, my husband. I a vine."

51. *favours*] love-tokens. So in many passages of Shakespeare, e.g. II. i. 12 of this play. Dyce (*Notes*, 62) says: "I think 'favours' decidedly right. Titania was seeking flowers for Bottom to wear as 'favours.' Compare Greene, 'These [fair women] with syren-like allurements entised these quaint squires,

that they bestowed all their 'flowers' upon them for 'favours.' *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, Sig. B 2, ed. 1620."

56. *orient*] Cf. *Richard III.* IV. iv. 322, "liquid drops of tears . . . transformed to orient pearl"; and *Venus and Adonis*, 981, "yet sometimes falls an orient drop." Craig refers to Drayton, *Polyolbion*, song, v. 17:

"The path was strew'd with pearls which though they orient were Yet scarce known from her feet, they were so wondrous clear."

To bear him to my bower in fairy land.  
 And now I have the boy, I will undo  
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes. 65  
 And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp  
 From off the head of this Athenian swain ;  
 That, he awaking when the other do,  
 May all to Athens back again repair ;  
 And think no more of this night's accidents 70  
 But as the fierce vexation of a dream.  
 But first I will release the fairy queen.  
     Be as thou wast wont to be ;  
     See as thou wast wont to see :  
     Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower 75  
     Hath such force and blessed power.  
 Now, my Titania ; wake you, my sweet queen.  
*Tita.* My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !  
 Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

67. *off*] of Q 1 ; *this*] the Johnson. 68. *That, he*] *That hee* Q 1 ; *That he* Q 2, Ff ; *other*] *others* Rowe. 69. *May all*] *All may* Grey conj. 73. *Be*] Qq, *Be thou* Ff. [touching her Eyes with an Herb] Capell ; Anointing her Eyes Collier (ed. 2). 75. *o'er*] Theobald (Thirlby conj.) ; *or* Qq, Ff.

73, 74. *Be . . . be, See . . . see*] "A sort of repetition which Puttenham (*The Arte of English Poesie*, iii. 19) calls Epanalepsis, or the Echo sound, and thus describes: Ye have another sort of repetition, when ye make one worde both beginne and end your verse, which therefore I call the slow retourne, otherwise the Echo sound, as thus:

Much must he be loued, that loveth much,

Feare many must he needs, whom many feare.

Unless I call him the echo sound, I could not tell what name to give him, unless it were the slow retourne." Rushton, *Shakespeare Illustrated*, part ii. p. 19.

75. *Dian's bud*] Steevens says: "This is the bud of the *Agnus Castus* or *Chaste Tree*. Thus in Macer's *Herball*, the vertue of this herbe is, that he wyl kepe man and woman chaste." So Chaucer in *The Flower and the Leaf*, 473 :

"That is Diane, goddesse of chastitie,  
 And for because that she a maiden is,  
 In her hond the braunch she beareth this,  
 That *Agnus castus* men call properly."

75. *Cupid's flower*] the pansy, the "little western flower" of II. i. 166, and II. ii. 27, *ante*.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass? 80

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Obe. Silence, a while.—Robin, take off this head.—

Titania, music call; and strike more dead

Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music; such as charmeth sleep. 85

[*Music, still.*]

Puck. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes  
peep.

Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me.

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will, to-morrow midnight, solemnly 90

Dance in duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair posterity:

81. *do]* *doth* Q 2, F 1; *his* Q 1; *this* Q 2, Ff. 82. *this* Qq, *his* Ff. 84. *sleep of all these five*] Theobald (Thirlby conj.); *sleep: of all these, fine* Qq, F 1, 2; *sleep; of all these find* F 3, 4; *sleep. Of all these fine* Rowe (ed. 2). 85. *ho]* *howe* Q 1. [*Music, still*] Musick still Ff; omitted Qq; Still Musick Theobald. 86. *Now, when thou wakest*] Q 1; *when thou wak'st* Q 2, F 1; *when thou awak'st* F 2, 3, 4. 92. *fair posterity*] Q 2, Ff; *fair prosperity* Q 1; *far posterity* Hammer (Warburton).

83. *dead*] Cf. *Julius Caesar*, iv. iii. 267, "O murderous slumber!" and *Tempest*, v. i. 220, "we were dead of sleep."

84. *these five*] i.e. Hermia, Helena, Lysander, Demetrius, Bottom.

85. Music, still] Dyce (*Remarks*, 48) says: "'Music still' is nothing more than *still music*; . . . the music, instead of 'ceasing before Puck spoke' (Collier), was not intended to commence at all till Oberon had said 'Sound music!' The stage-direction here (as we frequently find in early editions of plays) was placed prematurely, to warn the musicians to be in readiness."

88. *rock the ground*] See Introduction, and III. ii. 25, "at our stamp."

89. *new*] newly. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. ii. 510, "Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work."

92. *posterity*] I think the balance sways, though slightly, in favour of the reading of Q 2, Ff, and chiefly on account of the greater emphasis which it gives to "fair." The blessing is clearly amplified in 400-411 of v. i. "I prefer the present text," says Furness. "It involves a larger blessing. To Theseus's marriage the fairies bring present triumph, but on his house they confer the blessing of a fair posterity." Malone and most editors prefer the "prosperity" of Q 1, probably on the strength of II. i. 73, "to give their bed 'oy and prosperity."

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be  
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

*Puck.* Fairy king, attend and mark : 95

I do hear the morning lark.

*Obe.* Then, my queen, in silence sad,

Trip we after night's shade ;

We the globe can compass soon,

Swifter than the wandering moon. 100

*Tita.* Come, my lord ; and in our flight,

Tell me how it came this night,

That I sleeping here was found,

With these mortals on the ground.

[*Exeunt. Horns winded within.*]

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train.*

*The.* Go, one of you, find out the forester ; 105

For now our observation is perform'd :

And since we have the vaward of the day,

My love shall hear the music of my hounds.

Uncouple in the western valley ; go,

93. *the*] Qq, F 1 ; *these* F 2, 3, 4, 95. *Fairy*] Qq ; *Faire* F 1, 2 ; *Fair* F 3, 4. 97. *sad*] *fade* Theobald ; *staid* Daniel conj. 98. *night's*] *nights* Q 1 ; *the night's* Q 2, Ff ; *the night's* Rowe. 103.] Here the Ff give the stage-direction "Sleepers Lye still." 104. [*Horns . . . within*] winde horne Q 1 ; *winde* hornes Q 2, Ff. 105. *Scene II.*] Pope. Enter . . . and train] Enter . . . and all his traine Ff ; Enter Theseus and all his traine Qq. 109. *Uncouple . . . go*] *Uncouple . . . let them go* Qq, Ff ; *let them* omitted Pope ; *Let them uncouple in the western valley : Go* ; Capell conj. ; *Uncouple*] *Uncoupl'd* Anon. ap. Rann conj.

97. *sad*] grave, serious. See II. i. 51, "saddest tale" ; III. ii. 237, "sad looks" ; III. ii. 439, "curst and sad" ; V. i. 294, "to make a man look sad" ; *As You Like It*, III. ii. 227, "speak, sad brow, and true maid" ; and many other passages. The rhyme is imperfect, but not inferior to several in this play.

98. *night's*] Cf. "moon's," II. i. 7 and note thereon.

106. *observation*] See I. i. 167.

107. *vaward*] van (properly of an army) *prima acies*. Coles's *Lat. and Eng. Dict.*

109. *Uncouple, etc.*] It is very doubtful whether we have this line in the Qq, Ff as it left Shakespeare's hand. No

Despatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an Attend.*]

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top, I I I

And mark the musical confusion

Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

*Hip.* I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,

When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the boar I I 5

110. [*Exit . . .*] Dyce; omitted Qq, Ff. conj.); *bear* Qq, Ff.

115. *boar*] Hanmer (*Theobald*

other Alexandrine, or apparent Alexandrine, occurs in this play, and various efforts have been made to emend the line. Pope left out "let them," and he is followed by Dyce and most other editors. Marshall omits "western," on the ground that there is no particular meaning in "the western valley." On the contrary, it appears to me to give a certain local colour, and ought to be retained; whereas "let them" is useless to the sense, as all that is required is already expressed in the single word "uncouple." Cf. the only other passage in Shakespeare in which the word occurs (if indeed Shakespeare be responsible for it), namely, *Titus Andronicus*, II. ii. 3, "Uncouple here and let us make a bay." "Go" in this line is, I think, imperative, just as in line 108; and the above passage in *Titus Andronicus* increases the suspicion that the insertion of the words "let them" is a mere blunder and interpolation of a compositor ignorant of the exact meaning of "uncouple," and fancying that "go" was an infinitive and not an imperative.

114. *Hercules*] The chronology which brings Cadmus with Hercules and Hippolyta into the hunting-field together may be left to adjust itself, as Wright remarks.

115. *the boar*] This is the suggestion of Theobald, adopted by Hanmer, Capell, Dyce, Walker, and Hudson. On the other hand, we have the great authority of the Qq, Ff and the opinions of Steevens, Malone, Wright, and others in favour of retaining "bear." Steevens, in defence of "bear," refers to the

painting in the temple of Mars of "The hunte strangled with the wilde beeres," Chaucer, *Knights Tale*, line 1160 (ed. Morris), 2018 (ed. Pollard), and observes, "Bear-baiting was likewise once a diversion esteemed proper for royal personages, even of the softer sex." Malone refers to Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale* (III. iii.) being destroyed by a bear, which is chased by hunters. He also cites *Venus and Adonis*, 883:

"For now she knows it is no gentle chase,

But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud."

Tollet quotes Holinshed, Pliny, Plutarch, etc., as mentioning "bear-hunting"; and Wright thinks the references to "bear" and "bear-hunting" in Shakespeare are sufficiently numerous to justify the old reading. For the reading "boar" it may be urged that the misprint of "e" for "o" was "the easiest of all misprints in Shakespeare's time," as White (ed. 1) justly remarks. As to the quotation from Chaucer, it is somewhat remarkable that the Harl. MS. reads, "The hunte strangled with wilde 'bores' corage"; Morris in his note, however, considering this reading as corrupt, "for the 'boar' does not strangle." Theobald remarks that "the Erymanthian boar was famous among the Herculean labours"; and Capell that "in penning this passage, the poet appears to have had in his eye the 'boar' of Thessaly, and to have picked up some ideas from the famous description of that hunting"; and Walker

With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear  
 Such gallant chiding ; for, besides the groves,  
 The skies, the mountains, every region near  
 Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard  
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder. 120

*The.* My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
 So flew'd, so sanded ; and their heads are hung

118. *mountains*] Anon. *ap.* Theobald conj. 119. *Seem'd*] F 2, 3, 4 ; *Seeme* Qq, F 1.

thinks the story of Meleager would be sufficient to suggest the use of "boar" to Shakespeare ; and this seems to be confirmed by the reference in *Antony and Cleopatra*, iv. xiii. 2, to "the boar of Thessaly," which Steevens explained as "the boar killed by Meleager." The quotation from the *Venus* is indecisive, both animals being mentioned ; and both are also mentioned in ii. ii. 30, 31, *ante*. Dyce thinks the passages from Chaucer, Holinshed, etc., are of little or no weight, and in this I agree. On the balance of the probabilities, and especially having regard to the fact that the *Venus* preceded the *Midsummer Night's Dream* by a year or two only, and that consequently the hunting of the "boar" would naturally be fresh in Shakespeare's mind, and to the mention of Thessaly in lines 127 and 131, *post*, I have come to the conclusion that "boar" is the correct reading.

116. *hounds of Sparta*] swift and keen of scent. Cf. Vergil, *Georgics*, iii. 405 : "Veloces Spartæ catulos acremque Molossum Pæce sero pingui."

Halliwell quotes Golding's *Ovid* (p. 33, ed. 1567) in the description of Actæon's dogs, "This latter was a hounde of Crete, the other was of Spart."

117. *chiding*] noise, sound, cry. Cf. *As You Like It*, ii. i. 7, "and churlish chiding of the winter's wind"; and *Henry VIII.* iii. ii. 197, "the chiding flood."

118. *mountains*] This, I think, is

much the more probable reading, having regard to Theseus's mention of "mountain's" top in line 114, *ante*, and notwithstanding Theobald's quotation from Vergil, *Aeneid*, xii. 756, "ripæque lacusque Responsant circa."

120. *musical a discord*] In Shakespeare's early poetic period, at least, he was particularly fond of these verbal antitheses. Cf. v. i. 56-60 ; and the splendidly musical lines in *Venus and Adonis*, 431, 432 (of Adonis's "mermaid's voice") :

"Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh-sounding,

Ear's deep-sweet music, and heart's deep-sore wounding."

121. *My hounds*] Baynes (*Edin. Rev.*, Oct. 1872) remarks : "Shakespeare might probably enough, as the commentators suggest, have derived his knowledge of Cretan and Spartan hounds from Golding's *Ovid* . . . But in enumerating the points of the slow, sure, deep-mouthed hound, it can hardly be doubted he had in view the celebrated Talbot breed nearer home." See Madden's *Diary of Master William Silence* (1897).

122. *flew'd*] "flew's" are the large chaps of a deep-mouthed hound. Hanmer. See Golding's *Ovid* (1567), Bk. iii. 33 :

"And shaggie Rugge with other twaine that had a Syre of Crete,  
 And Dam of Sparta ; Tone of them  
 callde Iollyboy, a great  
 And large-flew'd hound."

122. *sanded*] "It means of a sandy



With ears that sweep away the morning dew;  
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;  
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells, 125  
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable  
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,  
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:  
 Judge, when you hear. But, soft; what nymphs are  
 these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep: 130  
 And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;  
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:  
 I wonder of their being here together.

124. *Thessalian*] *Thessalonian* F 4. 130. *is*] omitted Q 1. 132. *Nedar's*] *Nestor's* Walker conj. 133. *of their*] Q 1; *of this* Q 2, Ff; *at their* Pope.

colour, which is one of the true developments of a bloodhound." Steevens.

123. *ears . . . dew*] Wright quotes Heywood's *Brasen Age*, II. ii.:

"the fierce Thessalian hounds  
 With their flagge eares, ready to  
 sweep the dewe  
 From the moist earth."

124. *dew-lapp'd*] Cf. *The Tempest*, III. iii. 45, where the same expression is used of "mountaineers."

125. *match'd in mouth like bells*] Marshall compares Day's *Ile of Gulls*, II. ii.: "Dametas, were thine eares euer at a more musical banquet? How the hounds mouthes, like bells, are tuned one vnder another"; and *The Martyr's Soldier*, III. i., in Bullen's *Old Plays*, i. 203, "A packe of the bravest Spartan Dogges in the world; if they do but one open and spend there gabble, gabble, gabble, it will make the Forest ecchoe as if a Ring of bells were in it; admirably flew, by their eares you would take 'em to be singing boyes." Baynes (*Edin. Rev.*, Oct. 1872) says: "It is clear that in Shakespeare's day the greatest attention was paid to the musical quality of the cry. It was a ruling consideration in the formation of

a pack that it should possess the musical fulness and strength of a perfect canine quire. And hounds of good voice were selected and arranged in the hunting chorus on the same general principles that govern the formation of a cathedral or any other more articulate choir." And he refers to Markham's *Country Contentments*, p. 6: "If you would have your kennell for sweetnesse of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogges, that have deepe solemne mouthes, and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, beare the base in the consort, then a double number of roaring And loud ringing mouthes, which must beare the counter tenour, then some hollow, plaine, sweete mouthes, which must beare the meane or middle part; and soe with these three parts of musicke you shall make your cry perfect."

126. *A cry*] a pack of hounds giving tongue. Cf. *Othello*, II. iii. 376, "not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry."

133. *of*] Cf. III. i. 44, *ante*, "'Twere pity of my life"; and 141, *post*, "answer of her choice."

*The.* No doubt, they rose up early to observe  
 The rite of May; and, hearing our intent, 135  
 Came here in grace of our solemnity.  
 But speak, Egeus; is not this the day  
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice.

*Ege.* It is, my lord.

*The.* Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. 140  
*[Horns, and shout within. Demetrius, Lysander,  
 Hermia, and Helena wake and start up.]*

*The.* Good-morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past;  
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

*Lys.* Pardon, my lord.

*The.* I pray you all, stand up.  
 I know you two are rival enemies;  
 How comes this gentle concord in the world, 145  
 That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

*Lys.* My lord, I shall reply amazedly,  
 Half 'sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,  
 I cannot truly say how I came here: 150  
 But, as I think, (for truly would I speak,

135. *rite*] Pope; *right* Qq, Ff. 140] [*Horns . . .*] Theobald. Shoute within: they all start vp. Winde hornes Qq, Hornes and they wake. Shout within, they all start vp Ff. 146. *is*] *is is* F I. 149. *'sleep*] Capell; *sleep* Qq, Ff.

148. *amazedly*] In *The Tempest*, v. i. 215, is the stage-direction: *Re-enter Ariel with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following.*

149. *Half 'sleep, half waking*] Wright thinks these words are here substantives, and are loosely connected with the verb "reply." He quotes in support *Merry Wives*, III. ii. 69, "he speaks holiday"; *Twelfth Night*, I. v. 115, "he speaks nothing but madman"; *King John*, II.

i. 462, "he speaks plain cannon fire." But these constructions seem analogous to that of the cognate accusative in the classics; cf. our "looking daggers"; and the loose connection of the words with the verb seems to render Wright's construction altogether too strained. Most editors regard "'sleep" and "waking" as adjectives, not substantives.

And now I do bethink me, so it is,)

I came with Hermia hither: our intent

Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,

Without the peril of the Athenian law. 155

*Ege.* Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:

I beg the law, the law, upon his head.

They would have stolen away, they would, Demetrius,

Thereby to have defeated you and me,

You of your wife, and me of my consent, 160

Of my consent that she should be your wife.

*Dem.* My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,

Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

And I in fury hither follow'd them,

Fair Helena in fancy following me. 165

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,

(But by some power it is,) my love to Hermia,

Melted as is the snow, seems to me now

As the remembrance of an idle gawd,

154, 155. *might*, . . . *law*] *might* . . . *lawe*, Q 1; *might be* . . . *law* Q 2, Ff; *might Be without peril* . . . *law*. Hanmer; *might*, . . . *law*,—Dyce; *might Without* . . . *law* . . . Keightley. 164. *follow'd*] Rowe; *followed* Qq, Ff. 165. *following*] Q 1; *followed* Q 2, Ff. 167–169.] as in Pope; Qq, Ff end lines at *love* . . . *snow* . . . *gawd*. 168. *Melted as is*] Steevens (1785); *Melted as* Qq, Ff; *Is melted as* Pope; *Melted as doth* Capell; *All melted as* Staunton conj.; *Melted as melts* Dyce (ed. 2); *Melted as thaws* Kinnear conj.

154, 155. *where* . . . *law*] Dyce (ed. 2) says: "Q 2 and the Ff complete the sentence very awkwardly by adding 'be' to the reading of Q 1. Perhaps Hanmer was right in his text." I agree. "Without" seems to have a locative sense, as in i. ii. 204, and means "beyond." See *Tempest*, v. i. 271, "And deal in her command, without her power" (if the passage is to be interpreted in this sense).

168. *Melted* . . . *snow*] This line is irregular, a syllable having undoubtedly

fallen out. I prefer the reading of the Johnson and Steevens Var. of 1785, "melted as is," to any other; first, because it comes nearest to "as" in the trace of the letters; and next, which is somewhat remarkable, in F 1 lines 170–172 are wrongly spaced, and the "is" in "by some power it is" is printed directly over the place where the missing word ought to come in, the fair inference, I think, being that the second "is" escaped the compositor's notice.

Which in my childhood I did dote upon : 170

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,

The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,

Is only Helena. To her, my lord,

Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia :

But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food ; 175

Now, as in health, come to my natural taste ;

Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,

And will for evermore be true to it.

*The.* Fair lovers, you are fortunately met :

Of this discourse we will hear more anon. 180

Egeus, I will overbear your will ;

For in the temple, by and by with us,

These couples shall eternally be knit.

And, for the morning now is something worn,

Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. 185

Away, with us, to Athens ! three and three,

We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*]

*Dem.* These things seem small and undistinguishable,

174. *betroth'd*] *betrothed* Q 1; *saw Hermia*] Steevens (1778); *see Hermia* Qq, Ff; *did see Hermia* Rowe (ed. 1); *Hermia saw* Rowe (ed. 2). 175. *But, like in*] *Belike* as Bulloch conj.; *When, like in* Kinnear conj.; *in sickness*] Steevens (1793) (Farmer conj.); *a sickness* Qq, Ff. 176. Now] Editor, *yet* Hanmer. 177. *I do*] Q 1; *do I* Q 2, Ff. 180. *we will hear more*] *we more will here* Q 1, *we will hear more* Q 2, *we shall hear more* Ff, *more will we hear* Lettsom conj. 187, 188. *We'll . . . Hippolyta*] one line Qq. 188. *Come, Hippolyta*] *Come, my Hippolyta* Hanmer. *Exeunt . . .*] *Exeunt Duke and Lords* Ff; *Exit* Q 2; *omitted* Q 1.

175. *like in sickness*] Furness agrees with Wright in thinking that there is a corruption here, and that it lies in the repetition of "But"; and he supposes that the latter "But" (*i.e.* commencing line 176) has intruded into the place of "Now"; and he also thinks that the strong contrast between his former and his present state, which Demetrius

emphasises, warrants the repetition of "Now"; and that Farmer's change [namely, of "a" to "in"] serves to show us how little repugnance there was, to cultivated ears of that day, to the use of "like" as a conjunction. See Walker (*Crit.* ii. 115) for many instances of the use of "like" in the sense of "as."

Like far-off mountains turned into clouds. 190

*Her.* Methinks I see these things with parted eye,  
When everything seems double.

*Hel.* So methinks :

And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,  
Mine own, and not mine own.

*Dem.* Nay, are you sure

That we are yet awake? It seems to me 195  
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think  
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

*Her.* Yea; and my father.

*Hel.* And Hippolyta.

*Lys.* And he did bid us follow to the temple.

*Dem.* Why then, we are awake: let's follow him; 200  
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*

[*Bottom awakes.*

*Bot.* When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer :

193. *like*] omitted Hanmer; *jewel*] *gemell* Theobald (Warburton), *double* Cartwright conj. 194, 195. *Nay, are you sure That we are yet awake?* Editor; *Are you sure That we are awake?* Qq; omitted Ff; *But are . . . well awake?* Capell; *But are . . . now awake?* Steevens conj.; *Are . . . now awake?* Malone. 199. *did bid*] Q 1; *bid* Q 2, Ff. 200, 201.] prose in Qq, Ff; verse in Rowe (ed. 2). 201. *let us*] Q 2, Ff; *lets* Q 1. [*Exeunt*] Rowe; Exit Lovers Ff; Exit Q 2; omitted Q 1. 202. *Scene III.*] Pope. [*Bottom awakes*] Bottom wakes Ff, omitted Qq.

191. *parted eye*] with the eyes out of focus. "The eyes being out of unison so that the images in the two eyes do not coincide so as to form one picture." Phin. *Glossary*. Schmidt's very German explanation, "divided into pieces," is utterly inadmissible.

193. *like a jewel*] "Helena, I think, means to say that having 'found' Demetrius 'unexpectedly,' she considered her property in him as insecure as that which a person has in a jewel that he has 'found' by 'accident'; which he knows not whether he shall

retain, and which therefore may properly enough be called 'his own and not his own.'" Malone. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, III. ii. 18:

"O these naughty times  
Put bars between the owners and  
their rights!

And so, though yours, not yours"; also *Measure for Measure*, II. i. 24, "The jewel that we find we stoop and take't."

194. *Nay . . . awake*] The reading of Capell is perhaps as good as any. The Ff omit the passage.

my next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life; 205 stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can 210 tell what. Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue 215 to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the 220 duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it after death. [Exit.

207. *I have had*] Qq, *I had* Ff. 209. *to*] omitted Q 1. 212. *a patched*] *a patch'd* Ff, *patcht* a Qq. 218. *ballad*] F 4; *ballet* Qq, F 1, 2, 3. 220. *a play*] *the play* Hammer, *our play* Hudson (Walker conj.). 222. *after*] Theobald; *at her* Qq, Ff.

212. *patched fool*] "A fool in a parti-coloured coat." Johnson. Cf. "a crew of patches," III. ii. 9, *ante*, and the "motley fool" of *As You Like It*, II. vii. 13, etc.

218, 219. *Bottom's dream*] Fleay suggests that Shakespeare may here intend a glance at Robert Greene, who called one of his poems *A Maiden's Dream*, apparently because there was no maiden in it. Possibly.

220. *a play*] Walker (*Crit.* ii. 320) has collected several instances of the confusion of "a" and "our"; and his

conjecture of "our" in this passage has been adopted by Dyce and Hudson.!

222. *after death*] The conjecture of Theobald, which has been adopted by numerous editors. "He, as Pyramus, is killed upon the scene, and so might promise to rise again at the conclusion of the Interlude and give the Duke his dream by way of a song." Capell thinks "the singing after death does not allude to Pyramus's death, but a death in some play, 'a play' generally; opportunities of which the speaker was very certain of, from the

SCENE II.—*Athens. Quince's House.**Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING.*

*Quin.* Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

*Star.* He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt, he is transported.

*Flu.* If he come not, then the play is marred; it goes 5  
not forward, doth it?

*Quin.* It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus, but he.

*Flu.* No; he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

*Quin.* Yea, and the best person too: and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

*Flu.* You must say, paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

*Scene II.]* Capell; *Scene IV.* Pope. Athens Hanmer; Changes to the Town Theobald; Quince's House] A Room in Quince's House Capell. 1. Enter . . .] Rowe (ed. 2); Enter Quince, Flute, Thisby, and the rabble Qq; Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbie, Snout, and Starveling Ff. 3. Star.] Ff, Flut. Q 1, Flute Q 2. 5, 9, 13, 19. Flu.] Flute. Rowe (ed. 2); Thys. or This. or Thisb. Qq, Ff. 5, 6. goes not] Qq, F 1, 2; goes F 3, 4. 11. Quin.] Snout. Phelps (Halliwell conj.); too] to Q 1. 13. Flu.] Quin. Phelps conj. 14. naught] F 2, 3, 4; nought Qq, F 1. Enter Snug.] Rowe; Enter Snug, the Ioyner. Qq, Ff.

satisfaction he made no question of giving in discharging his present part."

*Scene II.*

1.] Theobald (see Nichols, *Lit. Illust.* [1817], ii. 237) thought that the Fifth Act should begin here, and pointed out that the scene should shift to Athens.

4. transported] changed, translated (see III. i. 117, and 122, *ante*), transformed. Schmidt defines the word in this passage by "to remove from this world to the next, to kill (euphemistic-

ally)," citing *Measure for Measure*, IV. iii. 72, where the Duke says of Barnardine, "to transport him in the mind he is were damnable." "It does not follow," as Furness remarks, "that a meaning which is appropriate in the Duke's mouth is appropriate in Starveling's"; and there need be no hesitation in saying "outright that Schmidt is downright wrong."

13, 14. God bless us] See note on v. l. 326, *post*.

14. a thing of naught] "naught" and "nought" are etymologically the same,

*Enter* SNUG.

*Snug.* Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, 15  
and there is two or three lords and ladies more  
married: if our sport had gone forward, we had  
all been made men.

*Flu.* O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost six-  
pence a-day during his life; he could not have 20  
'scaped sixpence a-day; an the duke had not  
given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus,  
I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: six-  
pence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

*Enter* BOTTOM.

*Bot.* Where are these lads? where are these hearts? 25

*Quin.* Bottom! O most courageous day! O most  
happy hour!

*Bot.* Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask

21. *an*] Pope; *And* Qq, Ff. 25. *hearts*] *harts* Q 1. 27. [All croud  
about him] Capell.

and the different senses are distinguished  
in the spelling. That the proper spell-  
ing here must be "naught" is clear  
from the ejaculation of Flute. Marshall  
compares *Richard III.* i. i. 97:

"*Brak.* With this, my lord, myself  
have *naught* to do.

*Glou.* *Naught* to do with Mistress  
Shore! I tell thee, fellow,  
He that doth *naught* with her,"  
etc.

19. *bully*] See III. i. 8.

19, 20. *sixpence a-day*] "Shakespeare  
has already ridiculed the title-page of  
*Cambyyses*, by Thomas Preston; and  
here he seems to allude to him, or some  
other person who, like him, had been  
pensioned for his dramatic abilities.

Preston acted a part in John Ritwise's  
play of *Dido* before Queen Elizabeth at  
Cambridge, in 1564; and the Queen  
was so well pleased that she bestowed  
on him a pension of twenty pounds a  
year, which is little more than a *shilling*  
*a day*." Steevens. It is possible,  
though hardly probable, that Shake-  
speare intended some ridicule on the  
actor mentioned; but he lived a genera-  
tion before Shakespeare wrote.

26. *courageous*] perhaps intended for  
"encouraging."

28. *I am to discourse*] Cf. *Two*  
*Gentlemen*, III. i. 59, "I am to break  
with thee of some affairs"; *Mer-*  
*chant of Venice*, i. i. 5, "I am to  
learn."



130 MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM [ACT IV.

me not what; for, if I tell you, I am no true  
Athenian. I will tell you everything, right as it 30  
fell out.

*Quin.* Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

*Bot.* Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is,  
that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel  
together; good strings to your beards, new 35  
ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the  
palace; every man look o'er his part; for the  
short and the long is, our play is preferred. In  
any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let  
not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they 40  
shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most  
dear actors, eat no onions, nor garlic, for we are  
to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to  
hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more  
words; away! go, away! *[Exeunt.* 45

29. *no*] Ff, *not* Qq. 30. *right* Qq, omitted Ff. 33. *All that*] *all* Rowe.  
38. *preferred*] *proffered* Theobald conj. 43. *doubt but*] Qq, F 1, 2; *doubt*  
F 3, 4. 45. *go, away!*] *go, away.* Theobald; *go away.* Qq, Ff. *[Exeunt]* Ff,  
omitted Qq.

35. *strings*] as Malone says, "to prevent the false beards, which they were to wear, from falling off."

38. *preferred*] offered for acceptance, "proffered," in fact, and included in the "brief" of Philostrate. See v. i. 42, *post*; but not necessarily or finally accepted for representation. Theobald says: "This word is not to be understood in its most common acceptance here, as if their play was

chosen in preference to the others (for that appears afterwards not to be the fact); but means that it was given in among others for the Duke's option. So, in *Julius Caesar*, III. i. 27, 28, Decius says:

"Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go,  
And presently prefer his suit to Cæsar."

## ACT V

SCENE I.—*Athens. The Palace of Theseus.*

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords,  
and Attendants.*

*Hip.* 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

*The.* More strange than true: I never may believe  
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;  
That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic, 10

*Act V. Scene 1.]* Rowe; Actus Quintus Ff; omitted Qq. Athens. The Palace of Theseus.] The Palace Theobald; The Same. A State-Room in Theseus's Palace Capell. Enter . . .] The stage-direction in the Ff is: "Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus and his Lords," and the speeches of Philostrate are assigned to Egeus, with the sole exception of 77-81. The direction in the Qq is: "Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, and Philostrate," and in line 38 they print "Philostrate" where the Ff have "Egeus." See note on line 38, *post.* 3. *antique*] Q 1; *antick* Q 2, F 1, 2; *antick* F 3, 4. 5, 6. *apprehend More than*] Theobald; *apprehend more Than* Qq, Ff. 5-8.] Three lines in Q 1 ending *more . . . lunatick . . . compact.* 6. *cool*] *cooler* Pope.

4. *seething*] Note the antithesis to "cool" in line 6, and cf. *Winter's Tale*, III. iii. 64, "Would any but these boiled brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt this weather?" *i.e.* boiling over in a state of turbulence or ferment (Craig); *Tempest*, v. i. 59, "thy brains, Now useless, boil'd within thy skull," *i.e.* brains with all the intellectual part extracted, incapable of thought (Craig); and *Macbeth*, II. i. 39, "the heat-oppressed brain."

5, 6.] Cf. *The Tempest*, v. i. 67, 68, "the ignorant fumes that mantle Their clearer reason."

8. *compact*] compacted, composed. See *Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 22, "compact of credit"; *Venus and Adonis*, 149, "compact of fire"; *As You Like It*, II. vii. 5, "compact of jars." Marshall quotes Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, II. ii., "A man compact of craft and perjury." For the form, see also "create," 402, and "consecrate," 412 in this scene.

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to  
heaven;

And, as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen 15

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

It comprehends some bringer of that joy; 20

Or, in the night, imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

12, 13.] In Q 1 ending *glance . . . And as*; in Q 2, F 1 with *glance . . . heaven*. 14-18.] as in Rowe (ed. 2); four lines in Qq, Ff, ending *things*; . . . *shapes . . . habitation . . . imagination*. 16. *shapes*] *shape* Pope; *airy*] Q 2; *ayery* Q 1; *aire* F 1, 3; *ayre* F 2; *air* F 4. 19. *it*] *he* Rowe (ed. 2). 21. *Or*] So Hanmer; *For* Anon. conj. (ap. Cambridge editors).

11. *Helen's beauty*] familiar to Elizabethans from the gorgeous lines of Marlowe, *Faust*, Scene xiv.:

"O thou art fairer than the evening  
air,

Clad in the beauty of a thousand  
stars."

11. *brow of Egypt*] i.e. "brow of a gypsy." Steevens.

12. *frenzy*] Drayton's fine lines on Marlowe (*Epistle to Reynolds*) are well known:

"And that fine madness still he did  
retain

Which rightly should possess the  
poet's brain."

16. *shapes*] I think Pope's change to the singular is unnecessary. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. ii. 69, "A foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas"; and *Twelfth Night*, i. i. 14:

"So full of shapes is fancy,  
That it alone is high fantastical."

21, 22.] Grant White (ed. 1) asks,

"Would Shakespeare, after thus reaching the climax of his thought, fall a-twaddling about bushes and bears?" and he cannot even bring himself to doubt that these lines are interpolated. The explanation of the Cowden-Clarkes is, perhaps, as satisfactory as can be given, assuming the reading "Or" is correct: "This concluding couplet, superficially considered, has an odd, bald, flat effect, as of an anti-climax, after the magnificent diction in the previous lines of the speech; but viewed dramatically they serve to give character and naturalness to the dialogue. The speaker is carried away by the impulse of his thought and nature of his subject into lofty expression, ranging somewhat apart from the matter in hand; then, feeling this, he brings back the conversation to the point of last night's visions and the lovers' related adventures by the two lines in question."

*Hip.* But all the story of the night told over,  
 And all their minds transfigured so together,  
 More witnesseth than fancy's images, 25  
 And grows to something of great constancy ;  
 But, howsoever, strange and admirable.  
*The.* Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

*Enter* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends ! joy, and fresh days of love,  
 Accompany your hearts !

*Lys.* More than to us 30  
 Wait on your royal walks, your board, your bed !

*The.* Come now ; what masques, what dances shall we have,  
 To wear away this long age of three hours,  
 Between our after-supper and bed-time ?

27. *But,*] *Be't* Hanmer. 28. *Enter . . .*] *Enter* Louers ; *Lysander . . .*  
*Qq, Ff* (after 27). 29. *days of love*] *F 2, 3, 4 ; days Of love Qq, F 1.* 30,  
 31. *More . . . bed !*] *prose Qq, F 1 ; verse F 2, 3, 4.* 31. *Wait on*] *Wait in*  
*Rowe.* 33, 34.] as in *Q 2*, ending *betweene . . . manager Q 1.* 34. *our*]  
*Ff, or Qq.*

25. *fancy's images*] Cf. the "un-  
 settled fancy" of *The Tempest*, v. i.  
 59.

26. *constancy*] consistency, stability,  
 certainty. Johnson.

27. *admirable*] in the earlier sense  
 of "wonderful," "marvellous." Cf.  
 "Admired Miranda !" *Tempest*, III.  
 i. 37.

34. *after-supper*] These words are  
 not connected with a hyphen, either in  
 the *Qq* or *Ff*. Nor by Cotgrave, who  
 has : "Regoubillonner. To make a  
*reare supper*, steale an *after supper*."  
 Cf. *Richard III.* iv. iii. 31, "Come  
 to me, Tyrrel, soon at *after supper*."  
 "The *reare-supper*," says Staunton,  
 "was to the supper itself what the  
*reare-banquet* was to the dinner—a  
*dessert*. On ordinary occasions the  
 gentlemen of Shakespeare's age appear

to have dined about eleven o'clock, and  
 then to have retired either to a garden-  
 house or other suitable apartment and  
 enjoyed their *reare-banquet* or dessert.  
 Supper was usually served between five  
 and six ; and this, like the dinner, was  
 frequently followed by a collation consist-  
 ing of fruits and sweatmeats, called,  
 in the country, the *reare-supper* ; in  
 Italy, Pocenio, from the Latin *Po-  
 canium*." Marshall says : "There is  
 little doubt that the two words were  
 not meant to express simply 'the time  
 after supper,' as Schmidt explains  
 them ; but the banquet or dessert taken  
*after supper* in another room, and  
 called *reare-supper* or *rear-supper*.  
 Harrison mentions this supplementary  
 meal in his *Description of England*,  
 Book ii. ch. vi. : 'Heretofore there  
 hath beene much more time spent in

Where is our usual manager of mirth? 35

What revels are in hand? Is there no play,

To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?

Call Philostrate.

*Phil.* Here, mighty Theseus.

*The.* Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?

What masque? what music? How shall we beguile 40

The lazy time, if not with some delight?

*Phil.* There is a brief how many sports are ripe:

Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*]

*The.* [*Reads.*] The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung

37, 38. *To . . . Philostrate*] one line Q 1. 38. *Philostrate* Qq, *Egeus* Ff.  
38, 42, 61. *Phil.*] Qq, *Ege.* Ff. 42. *ripe*] Q 1; *ripe* Q 2, Ff. 43. [*Giving*  
*a paper.*] Theobald. 44. *The.* [*Reads.*] Theobald, *The.* Q 1, *Thes.* Q 2, *Lis.*  
*Ff.*; *Centaurs*] *Centaur* F 4.

eating and drinking than commonlie is in these daies, for whereas of old we had breakfasts in the forenoone, beverages or nuntions after dinner, and thereto *reare suppers* generallie when it was time to go to rest (a toie brought into England by hardie *Canutus*." Craig quotes Christopher Langton, *Introduction to Phisicke* (1550), p. 85b: "Senec writeth that Asinius would not at after-supper so much as unseale a letter that he might go to bed with a quiet mynde"; and he compares "after-dinner" in *Trailus and Cressida*, II. iii. 121, "an after-dinner's breath," meaning a part of the day after dinner devoted to recreation.

38. *Philostrate*] *Egeus* here in the F, but *Philostrate* in line 76, *post*. The error perhaps arose from one actor doubling the parts of *Egeus* and *Philostrate*; another proof, as Furness points out, that the F was printed from a prompter's copy.

39. *abridgement*] amusement, pastime, diversion; that which makes the time seem short. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. ii.

439, "look, where my abridgement comes" (where, of course, the word is used in a double sense); and II. ii. 548, "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time."

42. *brief*] short account, abstract. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. ii. 138, "This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels."

44. *The.* [*Reads.*] "What has Lysander to do in the affair?" says Theobald. "He is no courtier of Theseus's, but only an occasional guest, and just come out of the woods, so not likely to know what sports were in preparation." I have taken the old Qq for my guides. Theseus reads the titles of the sports out of the list, and then alternately makes his remarks upon them. Knight, Halliwell, Marshall, and Furness prefer the arrangement in the Ff, Marshall thinking it "much more effective as far as the stage requirements are concerned." The probability, I think, is that Shakespeare originally made Theseus both read and comment, as in the Qq, and that this arrangement

By an Athenian eunuch to the harp. 45

We'll none of that: that have I told my love,  
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[*Reads.*] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.  
That is an old device; and it was play'd 50

When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

[*Reads.*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.

That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony. 55

[*Reads.*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.

Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief!

That is, hot ice and wondrous stained snow.

45. *harp.*] *Harpe?* Q 1. 49. *rage.*] F 4; *rage?* Qq, F 1, 2, 3. 53.  
*beggary.*] *beggery?* Q 1. 57. *mirth.*] *mirth?* Qq. 58-60.] prose in Qq,  
Ff. 59. *ice.*] *Ise* Q 1; and *wondrous stained snow*] Editor (Cartwright conj.);  
and *wondrous strange snow* Qq, Ff; and *wond'rous scorching snow* Hamner; a  
*wondrous strange shew* Warburton; and *wonderous strange snow* Theobald  
(ed. 2); and *wondrous strange black snow* Capell (Upton conj.); *seething snow*  
Collier (ed. 2); *swarthy snow* Dyce, ed. 2 (Staunton conj.); *staining snow*  
Nicholson conj.; *flaming snow* Joicey; *sable snow* Keightley (Bailey conj.);  
*orange* (or *raven* or *azure*) *snow* Bailey conj.; *swart snow* Kinnear conj.; and,  
*wondrous strange! jet snow* Ferring conj.

was afterwards altered to suit stage requirements, before the printing of the Folio.

44. *Centaur.*] See Ovid, *Metam.* Book xii.

52, 53. *The thrice three Muses . . . beggary*] See Introduction.

54. *critical*] censorious. Cf. *Othello*, II. i. 119, "For I am nothing, if not critical."

55. *ceremony*] apparently here pronounced as a trisyllable. See Walker, *Crit. Exam.* (1859), ii. 73.

56. *Pyramus*] See Golding's translation of the story, Appendix.

59. *hot ice and wondrous stained*

*snow*] The conjecture of the text, in which I have been anticipated by Cartwright, seems to be the least unsatisfactory of the many suggested readings in this passage. It is clear that there must be an antithesis between "strange" and "snow" corresponding to that between "hot" and "ice." Having regard to the latter antithesis, and to III. ii. 141, "That pure congealed *white*, high Taurus' snow," it is very probable that the necessary antithesis to "snow" in Shakespeare's mind had reference to its *colour* and not to its coldness. There are two readings which do least

How shall we find the concord of this discord, 60  
*Phil.* A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,  
 Which is as brief as I have known a play;  
 But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,  
 Which makes it tedious; for in all the play  
 There is not one word apt, one player fitted: 65  
 And tragical, my noble lord, it is;  
 For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.  
 Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,  
 Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears  
 The passion of loud laughter never shed. 70

61. *there is*] *it is* Hanmer, *this is* Collier (ed. 2). 66-70.] in Qq, F I  
 ending *Pyramus*, . . . *saw* . . . *water* . . . *laughter* . . . *shed*. 68. *saw*]  
*saw*'t Hanmer.

violence to the trace of the letters in the word "strange" of the old texts, and both of which give excellent sense, namely, "stained" and "orange" (cf. "strange" with "orange" and "stained"), "stained" being the more comprehensive and "orange" the more specific epithet. Orange, which is only a variant of red, was familiar enough to Shakespeare, as we see in the compound phrase, "orange-tawny," in this play, namely, I. ii. 96, as an epithet of beard, and III. i. 129, of the ousel's bill. Now it is well known, and was even observed by the ancients, that in the Alps, and particularly in the Polar regions, snow is sometimes coloured red by the presence of innumerable small plants, consisting of brilliant red globules resting on a gelatinous mass. The plant is an Alga, and is known as the *Protococcus nivalis*. Red snow was observed in the Arctic expedition under Captain Ross in 1818 (see his narrative, 1819), extending along the cliffs on the shore of Baffin's Bay for eight miles, the red colour extending to a depth of 12 feet. If Shakespeare, as is probable enough, had read an account of this phenomenon

in any of the descriptions of the old Arctic voyagers, he would have been quick to utilise it, and hence it is no extravagant assumption to imagine that he might have written either "stained" or "orange" as an epithet of snow, signifying "colour," without exactly defining it. Up to the present, however, no reference that I am aware of has been made to any passage of this kind in the old narratives. In defence of the Qq, Ff reading, Steevens thought the meaning to be "hot ice and snow of as strange a quality"; Knight remarked, "Surely snow is a common thing, and therefore 'wondrous strange' is sufficiently antithetical—hot ice and snow as strange"; and the Cowden-Clarkes were of opinion that "strange" in the sense of "anomalous," "unnatural," "prodigious," presents a sufficient image of contrast in itself, and they refer to its use in line 27 of this scene. But these arguments seem to me weak and inconclusive. And it by no means follows that the phrase "wondrous strange" is correct in this passage because Shakespeare uses it in *Henry VI.* II. i. 33, and *Hamlet*, I. v. 164.

*The.* What are they that do play it, *Philostrate*?

*Phil.* Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,  
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;  
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories  
With this same play, against your nuptial. 75

*The.* And we will hear it.

*Phil.* No, my noble lord,  
It is not for you: I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretch'd, and conn'd with cruel pain. 80  
To do you service.

*The.* I will hear that play;  
For never anything can be amiss,  
When simpleness and duty tender it.

71. *that do play it*, Philostrate?] Editor; *that do play it?* Qq, Ff. 75.  
nuptial] Qq, F 1; nuptials F 2, 3, 4. 76, 77.] as in Rowe (ed. 2); Qq, Ff  
ending hears it . . . heard. 76-80.] Daniel arranges: *No, my . . . for you,*  
*Unless . . . intents To do you service. I have heard it o'er, And it . . . world,*  
*Extremely . . . pain.* 79.] a parenthesis (Douce); a line lost after this  
(Johnson). 81, 82. *I . . . thing*] as in Rowe (ed. 2); one line Qq, Ff.

71. *that do play it*, Philostrate?] Clearly something has dropped out of this line. We may either supply "Philostrate?" as in the text, or read "that do play it? *Phil.* My noble lord, Hard-handed men," etc., if we fall in with Schmidt's sneer as to the "blunt answer which no Englishman would think of giving to a prince."

74. *unbreathed*] unexercised, unpractised. Steevens.

75. *nuptial*] The singular form is universal in Shakespeare, with possible exceptions in *Othello*, II. ii. 9, where the Qq have the plural; and *Pericles*, v. iii. 80 (if Shakespeare be responsible for the latter passage, and in my opinion he certainly is not).

79. *intents*] "Intents" here, as the subject of the two verbs, 'stretch'd' and 'conn'd,' is used both for *endeavour* and

for the object of endeavour, by a licence which other writers than Shakespeare have assumed." R. G. White (ed. 1).  
81-83.] Marshall well remarks: "Although Shakespeare ridicules those entertainments and interludes, which were presented by the rustic amateurs before great people, yet he, at the same time, furnishes the best and most generous defence of them; and teaches us how such simple-minded, if ridiculous, efforts should be treated by all persons of good breeding." Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 516 *sqq.*, "That sport best pleases that doth least know how," etc.; and Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, v. iii.:

"Nothing which duty and desire to please,  
Bears written in the forehead, comes amiss."



Go, bring them in; and take your places, ladies.

[Exit Philostrate.

*Hip.* I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged, 85

And duty in his service perishing.

*The.* Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

*Hip.* He says, they can do nothing in this kind.

*The.* The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake: 90

And what poor simple duty cannot do,

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed

84 [Exit. . .] Pope; omitted Qq, Ff. 91. *poor simple duty*] Editor (Cartwright conj.); *poor fearful duty* Editor conj.; *poor duty* Qq, Ff; *poor willing duty* Theobald; *poor duty meaning* Spedding conj.; *poor faltering duty* Keightley; *do*] *do aright* Seymour conj.; *do, yet would* Coleridge conj.; *apily do* Bailey conj.; *do, but would* Abbott conj.; *cannot do*] *would, but cannot do* Halliwell. 92. *Noble respect takes*] Theobald. 91, 92. *noble respect Takes* Qq, Ff. 92. *it in might, not merit*] *not in might, but merit* Johnson conj.; *it in merit, not in might* Seymour conj.; *it in mind, not merit* Spedding conj.

91, 92. *And what . . . merit*] *i.e.* when "simpleness" and "duty" strive and are unable to perform, the noble mind [cf. *Hamlet*, III. i. 100] looks at the effort and not at the merit of the performance. The text of the Folio clearly shows that the rhythm of the lines was lost in the mind of the compositor; the result being the omission of a second adjective before "duty." And the evidence of this appears, I think, from the tenor of the whole passage. See, in especial, lines 83, "simpleness and duty"; 86, "duty"; 101, "fearful duty"; 104, "love" and "simplicity." The two adjectives which in my opinion best fulfil all the conditions requisite to satisfy rhythm and meaning are "simple" and "fearful"; the balance of probability delicately inclining to either. The whole passage 81-105 naturally divides itself into two parts, namely, 81-92 and 93-103, ending with the conclusion in lines 104, 105; and "duty" is, I think, qualified by dif-

ferent epithets in these two parts. In the first part it is qualified with the idea of "simpleness." Shakespeare starts with this idea in line 83, and he winds up with the same idea in line 104. Lines 93-103 (the key to which is "*fearful duty*" in line 101) suggest the idea of duty accompanied by fear, not "simpleness." Our choice therefore for a missing epithet in line 92 must lie between these two qualifying words "simple" and "fearful"; and I think the balance inclines to "simple," on the ground that Shakespeare begins and ends with that idea, namely, of "simpleness"; and consequently that Cartwright's reading is entitled to acceptance over any yet proposed.

93-103.] These lines may have been suggested to Shakespeare by some of the elaborate addresses received by Elizabeth during her royal progresses, and particularly by what happened at Warwick in 1572, where the recorder was so confused as to be unable to pro-

To greet me with premeditated welcomes;  
 Where I have seen them shiver and look pale, 95  
 Make periods in the midst of sentences,  
 Throttle their practised accent in their fears,  
 And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,  
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,  
 Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome; 100  
 And in the modesty of fearful duty  
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.  
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,  
 In least, speak most, to my capacity. 105

*Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.*

*Phil.* So please your grace, the prologue is addres'd.

*The.* Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

*Enter QUINCE for the Prologue.*

*Pro.* If we offend, it is with our good-will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,

95. *Where*] *When* Hanmer. 105. *Re-enter . . .*] Capell; *Enter . . .* Pope (ed. 2); *Enter Philomon Pope* (ed. 1); omitted Qq, Ff. 106. *Phil.*] Qq, Egeus. Ff. 107. [*Flourish of trumpets*] Flor. Trum. Ff, omitted Qq. 108. *Scene II.*] Pope. *Enter Quince for the Prologue*] Rowe; *Enter the Prologue* Qq; *Enter the Prologue Quince* F 1, 2; *Enter Prologue Quince* F 3, 4.

ceed with the address. See Nicholls, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, i. 315. Cf. *Pericles*, v. Pro. 5, "Deep clerks she dumbs."

98. *have*] understand "they."

106. *addres'd*] ready, prepared, as in several passages in Shakespeare.

107. *Flourish of trumpets*] It appears from Dekker's *Guls Hornbook*, 1609 (ed. Grosart, ch. vi. p. 350), that the prologue was anciently ushered in by trumpets. "Present not your selfe on the Stage (especially at a new play)

untill the quaking prologue hath (by rubbing) got color into his cheekes, and is ready to give the trumpets their Cue, that hees vpon point to enter." It will be remembered that young gallants sat on three-footed stools on the stage itself.

107. *Enter Quince for the Prologue*] "The person who spoke the prologue, who entered immediately after the third sounding, usually wore a long black velvet cloak, which, I suppose, was best suited to a supplicatory address.

But with good-will. To show our simple skill, 110

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.

We do not come, as minding to content you,

Our true intent is. All for your delight,

We are not here. That you should here repent  
you, 115

The actors are at hand; and, by their show,

You shall know all, that you are like to know.

*The.* This fellow doth not stand upon points.

*Lys.* He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he  
knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it 120  
is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

*Hip.* Indeed he hath played on his prologue, like a  
child on a recorder; a sound, but not in govern-  
ment.

114. *is. All*] *is all* Pope.

*points*] *his points* Collier (ed. 2).

conj. 122. *his*] *Ff, this* Qq.

3, 4.

115. *here. That*] *here that* Pope.

120. *A good*] *Dem. A good* Cambridge editors

123. *a recorder*] *Qq, F 1; the recorder* F 2,

Of this custom, whatever may have been its origin, some traces remained until very lately; a black coat having been, if I mistake not, within those few years, the constant stage-habilliment of our modern prologue-speakers. The complete dress of the ancient prologue-speaker is still retained in the play exhibited in *Hamlet*, before the King and Court of Denmark." Malone, *Hist. Eng. Stage*, Var., 1821, vol. iii. p. 115.

108-117.] There is a similar instance of the ingenious perversion of sense by mispunctuation in Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, 1566, III. ii., where Ralph's letter to Dame Custance, as read by Matthew Merrygreek, begins:

"Sweete mistress, where as I love  
you nothing at all,  
Regarding your substance and  
richesse chiefe of all," etc.

118. *stand upon*] Cf. *Julius Caesar*, III. i. 100, "'tis but the time, And drawing days out, that men stand upon."

120. *the stop*] a term in horsemanship, indicating that the horse was thrown upon its haunches. See Madden, *Diary of Master William Silence* (1897), p. 298; and cf. *Cymbeline*, V. iii. 40, "Then began a stop if the chaser, a retire." Cf. also *A Lover's Complaint*, 109, "what rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes!"

123. *recorder*] a kind of flute or flageolet. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. ii. 360. Chapell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 246, says: "Old English musical instruments were made of three or four different sizes, so that a player might take any of the four parts that were required to fill up the harmony . . . Shakespeare speaks in *Hamlet* of the

# MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM 141

speech was like a tangled chain; nothing 125  
paired, but all disordered. Who is next?

PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE,  
*and* LION.

entles, perchance you wonder at this show;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.  
man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
This beauteous lady Thisby is, certain. 130  
man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder:  
through wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper: at the which let no man wonder.  
man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn, 135  
Presenteth moonshine; for, if you will know,  
moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

Qq, F 1; *the next* F 2, 3, 4. Tawyer with a trumpet before them Ff.  
Enter . . . as in dumb Show Capell. 131. *lime*] *loam* Hudsons  
MS.). 132. *that*] Qq, F 1; *the* F 2, 3, 4. 135. *lanthorn*]

as a little pipe, and (in the  
*Night's Dream* says) like  
on a recorder, but in an en-  
of the instrument it reaches  
lip to the knee of the per-  
Salter describes the 'recorder,'  
the instrument derives its  
situate in the upper part of it,  
the hole below the mouth  
highest hole for the finger."  
124. *government*] control. Cf.  
111. ii. 372, "Govern these  
with your fingers and thumb."  
"Tawyer" in the stage-direc-  
the Folios is "generally under-  
ber on the name of the trumpeter;  
lier on the strength of a note in  
rected Folio 'Enter Presenter,'

interpreted 'Tawyer' as the name of the  
actor who filled the part of Presenter  
and introduced the characters of the  
play." Cambridge editors' note.

130. *certain*] "A most convenient  
word for filling up a line, and at the  
same time conveying no meaning."  
Wright. Steevens thinks, perhaps  
rightly, that a burlesque was here in-  
tended in its frequent recurrence as a  
bungling rhyme in poetry more ancient  
than the age of Shakespeare; and he  
gives several quotations from Wynkyn  
de Worde (Var. ed. vol. v. 318).

135. *lanthorn, dog, and bush*] Cf.  
Caliban in *The Tempest*, II. ii. 151,  
"my mistress show'd me thee, and thy  
dog, and thy bush."

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,  
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night, 140

Did scare away, or rather did affright :  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall ;  
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth, and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain : 145

Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast ;  
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

139. *grisly*] *grizy* F 1 ; *Lion hight by name*] *by name Lion hight* Theobald.  
141. *scare*] F 3, 4 ; *scarre* Qq, F 1, 2. 142. *did fall*] *let fall* Pope. 145.  
*trusty*] Qq ; omitted F 1 ; *gentle* F 2, 3, 4. 148. *And Thisby, tarrying*]  
Qq, Ff ; *And, Thisby tarrying* Malone ; *in*] *in the* F 3, 4.

139-141.] "As all the other parts of this speech are in *alternate* rhyme, excepting that it closes with a *couplet* ; and as no rhyme is left to 'name,' we must conclude either a verse is *slipt out*, which cannot now be retrieved ; or by transposition of the words, as I have placed them, the poet intended a *triplet*." Theobald. Malone conjectures that a line has been lost after "night." The Cowden-Clarks (*Shakespeare Key*, p. 674) believe that the defective rhyming was intentional, to denote the slipshod style of the doggerel that forms the dialogue in the interlude, which they had always cherished a conviction Shakespeare intended to be taken as written by Peter Quince himself ; and Furness "wholly agrees" with their view. I wholly disagree, and wholly agree with Theobald and Malone that a verse has "slipt out" ; but the loss can merely be indicated in the text, without "any attempt to improve the language of the rude mechanicals."

146, 147.] Wright aptly remarks of the alliteration that "it was an exaggeration of the principle upon which

Anglo-Saxon verse was constructed." Cf. "the raging rocks," etc., *ante*, I. ii. 33, 271 *post*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. ii. 57 (where Holofernes calls it "affecting the letter"), "The pretyful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket," etc. Rushton, *Shakespeare Illustrated*, 2nd part, 1868, p. 15, referring to the above passages, quotes Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, lib. iii. cap. 22, "Ye have another manner of composing your metre nothing commendable, specially if it be too much used, and is when one maker takes too much delight to fill his verse with wordes beginning all with a letter, as an English rimer that said :

'The deadly droppes of darke disdain,  
Do daily drench my due desertes.'  
... And such like, for such composition makes the meetre ruane away smoother, and passeth from the lippes with more *facilitie* by *iteration* of a letter than by alteration, which alteration of a letter requires an exchange of ministry and office in the lippes, teeth on palate, and so doth not the *iteration*."

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain, 150  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and*

*The.* I wonder if the lion be to speak. [Moonshine.

*Dem.* No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many  
asses do.

*Wall.* In this same interlude it doth befall, 155

That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole, or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly. 160

This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show,  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

*The.* Would you desire lime and hair to speak better? 165

*Dem.* It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard  
discourse, my lord.

*The.* Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

*Re-enter PYRAMUS.*

*Pyr.* O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!  
O night, which ever art, when day is not! 170

151. [*Exeunt* . . .] Exit Lyon, Thysby, and Moonshine Qq (after 154);  
Exit all but the Wall Ff (repeating direction of Qq). 156. *Snout*] Ff, *Flute* Qq.  
158. *crannied*] *cranny* Collier conj. 159. *Pyramus*] *Pyr'mus* Theobald;  
*Thisbe*] *This-be* Theobald. 161. *loam*] F 3, 4; *lome* Qq; *loame* F 1, 2;  
*Moss* Reed (Capell conj.). 167. *discourse*] in *discourse* Farmer conj. 168,  
186. *Re-enter* . . .] Wright; *Enter* . . . Qq, Ff.

158. *crannied*] See 163, *post*.  
163. *cranny*] See Golding's *Ovid*,  
*Metam.* Book iv., "The wall that parted  
house from house had riuen therein a  
"crany."  
163. *sinister*] an assonance with 169. *grim-look'd*] *grim-looking*, per-

"whisper" in the next line. It is  
accented on the penultimate, as in  
*Henry V.* II. iv. 85, *Troilus*, IV. v.  
128, and, I think, in every other pas-  
sage, prose and verse, where it occurs.

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall, 175

Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.

[*Wall holds up his fingers.*]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me! 180

*This.* The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

*Pyr.* No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me," is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see 185  
it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*Re-enter THISBY.*

*This.* O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

For parting my fair Pyramus and me!

My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones;

Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee. 190

173. *O sweet, O*] Qq, *thou sweet and* Ft, *O sweet and* Pope. 176. Wall . . . fingers] Capell. 183-186.] four lines in Qq, Ft. 184. *now*] omitted Ft. 186. *it will fall pat . . . comes.* Re-enter Thisbe] *it will fall . . . comes.* Enter T. Qq; *it will fall.* Enter Thisbe. *Pat . . . comes* Ft. 190. *hair*] *hairs* Q 1; *up in thee*] Ft, *now again* Qq.

hairs; an example of an indefinite and apparently not passive use of a passive participle. See Abbott, § 374.

190. *knit up*] In *The Tempest*, iii. iii. 89, of Prospero's enemies, "all knit up in their distractions."

*Pyr.* I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.  
Thisby!

*This.* My love thou art, my love I think.

*Pyr.* Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace, 195  
And like Limander am I trusty still.

*This.* And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

*Pyr.* Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

*This.* As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

*Pyr.* O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall. 200

*This.* I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

*Pyr.* Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

*This.* Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

*Wall.* Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus wall away doth go. [*Exit.* 205

*This.* Now is the mure all down between the two neigh-  
bours.

191. *sw*] Qq, F 1; *hears* F 2, 3, 4. 192, 193. *To spy . . . Thisby* /] one  
line Qq, Ff. 192. *an*] Pope; and Qq, Ff; *hear*] Qq, F 1; see F 2, 3, 4.  
194. *love thou art, my love*] Qq, Ff; *love! thou art, my love*, Theobald. 197.  
/] Qq, F 1; omitted F 1, 3, 4. 200. *vile*] *vilde* Q 1. 203. [*Exeunt* P. and  
T.] Dyce. 205. [*Exit*] *Exit* Clow. Ff; omitted Qq; *Exeunt* Wall, P. and  
T. Capell. 206. *mure all*] Hanmer (Theobald conj.), *Mure used* Qq, *moral*  
Ff, *mural* Pope (ed. 2), *wall* Collier conj.

196-199. *Limander, etc.*] "Limander and Helen are spoken by the blundering player for Leander and Hero; Shafalus and Procrus, for Cephalus and Procris." Johnson. "Procris and Cephalus," by Henry Chute, was entered on the Stationers' Registers by John Wolff in 1593, and probably published in the same year. It was a poem, but not dramatic, as has been suggested." Malone. It had almost certainly been read by Shakespeare.

206. *mure all*] See Text. notes.

Theobald (*Shakespeare Rest.* p. 142) says: "I am apt to think the poet wrote 'Now is the mure all down,' and then Demetrius's reply is apposite enough." "Mure," meaning wall, occurs in *2 Henry IV.* iv. iv. 119, but "mural" is not found in Shakespeare. R. G. White (ed. 1) says: "'Mural' for 'wall' is an anomaly in English, and is too infelicitous to be regarded as one of Shakespeare's daring feats of language . . . Shakespeare evidently thought that it would be plainer if the wall were represented both as the re-



*Dem.* No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful  
to hear without warning.

*Hip.* This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard. 210

*The.* The best in this kind are but shadows: and the  
worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

*Hip.* It must be your imagination, then, and not  
theirs.

*The.* If we imagine no worse of them than they of 215  
themselves, they may pass for excellent men.  
Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

*Re-enter LION and MOONSHINE.*

*Lion.* You ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here, 220  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

209. *hear*] *rear* Hanmer (Warburton), *sheer* Hanmer conj. MS. 210, 213.  
*Hip.*] Dutch or Dut. Qq, Ff. 210. *ever*] Q 1; *ere* Q 2, Ff. 217. *come*]  
Qq; *com* F 1; *comes* F 2, 3, 4; *beasts in, a man*] Rowe (ed. 2); *beasts, in a*  
*man* Qq, Ff; *beasts in a moon* Theobald; *beasts in, a moon* Hanmer. 217.  
*Re-enter . . .*] Wright; *Enter* Qq, Ff.

straint upon the passions of the lovers and as a pander to them, and so he changed 'moon used' to 'moral down.' He did this, I believe, with the more surety of attaining his point, because 'moral' was then pronounced 'mo-ral,' and 'mural,' as I am inclined to think, 'moo-ral.'" I am inclined to think with Furness that "in the old pronunciation lay a pun, now lost, and for a pun, as Johnson said, Shakespeare would lose the world, and be content to lose it." Marshall suggests that there may have been a proverbial expression "the wall is down between the neighbours," meaning "the cause of difference between them is at an end."

209. *to hear*] "Demetrius's reply alludes to the proverb 'walls have ears,'

A 'wall' between almost any 'two neighbours' would soon be 'down,' were it to exercise this faculty without previous 'warning.'" Farmer. Probably.

217. *a man*] Theseus only means to say that the "man" who represented the moon, and came in at the same time, with a lanthorn in his hand and a bush of thorns at his back, was as much a beast as he who performed the part of the lion. Malone. Wright preferred (1877) the punctuation of the Qq, Ff. He then considered that "in" here signifies "in the character of," as in IV. ii. 24, "sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing." In the Cambridge edition (1891) he adopts the punctuation of Rowe.

Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

No lion fell, nor else no lion's dam :

For if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life. 225

*The.* A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

*Dem.* The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er  
I saw.

*Lys.* This lion is a very fox for his valour.

*The.* True ; and a goose for his discretion. 230

*Dem.* Not so, my lord : for his valour cannot carry  
his discretion ; and the fox carries the goose.

*The.* His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his  
valour ; for the goose carries not the fox. It is  
well : leave it to his discretion, and let us listen 235  
to the moon.

*Moon.* This lanthorn doth the horned moon present.

*Dem.* He should have worn the horns on his head.

222, 223. *I . . . dam*] *I am Snug the joiner in A lion-fell, or else a lion's skin* Daniel conj. 222. *one*] Ff, as Qq. 223. *No lion fell*] Rowe, Capell ; *A Lyon fell* Qq, Ff ; *A lion-fell* Singer (ed. 2) ; *A lion's fell* Dyce (ed. 1) (Field conj.) ; *else*] *aka* Capell. 225. *on*] Qq, of Ff. 235. *listen*] Q 1 ; *hearken* Q 2, Ff. 238. *on*] *upon* Hanmer.

223. *No lion fell*] Rowe's reading is, after all, to be preferred. As Marshall well remarks, the "no" before "lion's dam" seems to point to "no" and not "a" as the right reading ; and Snug has already used "rough" or an epithet of lion in line 225, and of this "fell" seems merely a variant. See also the "lion vile" of Pyramus, 297, *post.* For the negative construction we may compare *Julius Caesar*, III. i. 90, "There is no harm intended to your person, Nor to no Roman else." No doubt Shakespeare intended a quibble between fell "skin" and fell "fierce." Craig, adhering to the reading of the Qq, Ff, prefers to take "fell"

in the sense of "skin," or "skin with the wool on" ; and reminds us that England sent wool-fells to Flanders in Edward III.'s reign.

237. *lanthorn*] Steevens needlessly modernised this word into "lantern," and has been followed by many of the best editors, thereby obliterating the jingle, if there be one, in "This lanthorne doth the horned moone present." The Cambridge edition, both first and second, nicely discriminates between the pronunciation of Snug and of Theseus by giving "lanthorn" to the former and "lantern" to the latter. Furness. There is no harm in this.

*The.* He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible  
within the circumference. 240

*Moon.* This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;  
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

*The.* This is the greatest error of all the rest: the  
man should be put into the lantern. How is it  
else the man i' the moon? 245

*Dem.* He dares not come there for the candle; for,  
you see, it is already in snuff.

*Hip.* I am aweary of this moon: would he would  
change!

*The.* It appears, by his small light of discretion, that 250  
he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all  
reason, we must stay the time.

*Lys.* Proceed, Moon.

*Moon.* All that I have to say is, to tell you, that the  
lanthorn is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; this 255  
thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

*Dem.* Why, all these should be in the lantern; for  
all these are in the moon. But, silence! here  
comes Thisbe.

242. *do*] Q 2, *doe* Q 1, *doth* Ff. 244, 257. *lantern*] *lanthorne* Qq, Ff.  
248. *aweary*] Q 1; *weary* Q 2, Ff. 250. *his*] *this* Pope. 255. *i' the*] *in* Q 1;  
*in the* Q 2, Ff. 257, 258. *for all these*] Q 1; *for they* Q 2, Ff.

243. *of all*] See Abbott, § 409, for illustrations of this idiom. He calls it "the confusion of two constructions in superlatives." Cf. also in this play, iv. ii. 9, "the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens"; and iii. ii. 337, "to try whose right, *Of thine or mine*, is most in Helena."

247. *in snuff*] The primary meaning is of course the deposit which gathers on the wick of a candle, and which has to be removed for better light. From

the darkening of a light by this deposit, the word snuff came to mean offence, anger, as here, and *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 22, "You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff," and other passages in Shakespeare, e.g. *1 Henry IV.* i. iii. 41, and *Lear*, iii. i. 26.

250. *small light of discretion*] Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. ii. 734, "I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion."

*Re-enter THISBE.*

*This.* This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love? 260

*Lion.* Oh—.

[*The Lion roars. Thisbe runs off.*

*Dem.* Well roared, lion.

*The.* Well run, Thisbe.

*Hip.* Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with  
a good grace. 265

[*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

*The.* Well moused, lion.

*Lys.* And so the lion vanished.

*Dem.* And then came Pyramus.

*Re-enter PYRAMUS.*

*Pyr.* Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright; 270

For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,

I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

260, 268. *Re-enter . . .*] Wright; Enter . . . Qq, Ff. 260. *old . . . tomb*  
*ould . . . tumba* Q 1; *Where is* *Wher's* Q 2. 261.] The Lion roars,  
*Thisby runs off* Ff, omitted Qq. 265. *a*] omitted Rowe (ed. 1); [*The Lion*  
*. . . exit*] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff. 266. *moused*] *mous'd* Qq, Ff; *mouth'd*  
Rowe. 267, 268.] as transposed by Hudson (Spedding conj.); *Dem. And*  
*then . . . vanished* Qq, Ff. 271. *gleams*] Staunton (Knight conj.); *beams*  
Qq, F 1; *streams* F 2, 3, 4. 272. *take*] Qq, *taste* Ff; *Thisby*] Qq,  
*Thisbies* Ff.

267, 268.] The suggestion of Spedding as to the arrangement of these lines is probably warranted by the sense.

271. *gleams*] the alliteration obviously requires this instead of the reading of the Qq, F 1, or the Ff, even though it does not seem to occur elsewhere in the plays. The verb occurs

in *Lucrece*, 1378, "And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights." Furness thinks "beams" should be "retained in the speech of one whose eye had not heard, nor his ear seen, nor his hand tasted a dream which he had in the wood where he had gone to rehearse obscenely"—reasoning which appears to be entirely inconclusive.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here! 275

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood! 280

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates! come, come;

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

*The.* This passion, and the death of a dear friend, 285  
would go near to make a man look sad.

*Hip.* Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

*Pyr.* O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame 290

That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with  
cheer.

273-284.] as in Pope; eight lines Qq, Ff. 278. *dear*] *deare* Qq; *Deere* F 1, 2; *Deer* F 3, 4. 281. *ye*] Qq, *you* Ff. 285, 286] verse in Ff, ending *friend . . . sad*. 289. *vile*] Pope; *vilde* Qq, F 1; *vild* F 2, 3, 4; *wild* Rowe; *dear*] *deare* Qq; *deere* F 1, 2; *Deer* F 3, 4.

281. *Approach, ye Furies*] Malone says: "In these lines and in those spoken by Thisbe, 'O sisters three,' etc., lines 334 *sqq.*, the poet probably intended, as Dr. Farmer observed to me, to ridicule a passage in *Damon and Pythias*, by Richard Edwards, 1582 (p. 44, ed. Hazlett's *Dodsley*):

'Ye furies, all at once  
On me your torments trie:  
Gripe me, you greedy griefs,  
And present pangues of death,  
*You sisters three, with cruel handes  
With speed come stop my breath!*'"

283. *thrum*] "The tufted part beyond the tie, at the end of the warp, in weaving; or any collection or tuft of short thread." Nares. Cf. "thrummed hat" in *The Merry Wives*, iv. ii. 80, a hat made of weaver's thrums, or at least of very coarse woollen cloth.

284. *quell*] kill, murder, usually a verb in Shakespeare, but a noun in *Macbeth*, i. vii. 72, "of our great quell."

285, 286. *This passion . . . sad*] "The humour of the present speech consists in coupling the ridiculous fustian of the clown's assumed passion with an event

Come, tears, confound ;  
 Out, sword, and wound  
 The pap of Pyramus ;  
 Ay, that left pap, 295  
 Where heart doth hop : [*Stabs himself*  
 Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.  
 Now am I dead,  
 Now am I fled ;  
 My soul is in the sky : 300  
 Sun, lose thy light !  
 Moon, take thy flight ! [*Exit Moonshine*  
 Now die, die, die, die, die." [*Dies.*  
*Dem.* No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but  
 one. 305  
*Lys.* Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is  
 nothing.  
*The.* With the help of a surgeon, he might yet recover,  
 and prove an ass.

292-303.] as in Pope ; seven lines in Qq, Ff. 296. [*Stabs himself*] Dyce ; omitted Qq, Ff. 301. *Sun*] *Sunne* Anon. *ap.* Rann ; *Tongue* Qq, Ff ; *lose* Q 2, Ff ; *loose* Q 1. 302. [*Exit M.*] Capell ; omitted Qq, Ff. 303. [*Dies*] Capell ; omitted Qq, Ff. 309. *and prove*] Q 2, Ff ; *and yet proove* Q 1.

which would,\*in itself, make a man look sad" [*i.e.* serious]. R. G. White.

294. *pap*] "It ought to be remembered that the broad pronunciation, now almost peculiar to the Scotch, was anciently current in England. 'Pap' therefore was sounded 'pop.'" Steevens.

301. *Sun*] Capell says Bottom's "tongue," instead of "sunne" or "sun," is a very choice blunder ; and Halliwell aptly remarks : "The present error of 'tongue' for 'sun' appears too absurd to be humorous, and it may well be questioned whether it be not

a misprint." The collocation of the word, namely, between "sky" and "moon," is certainly in favour of Halliwell's view. It is somewhat remarkable that "tongue" occurs in its proper place in line 340, *post*, "Tongue, not a word."

304. *ace*] See the *New Eng. Dict.*, s.v. : "As the ace at dice was the lowest or worst number, 'ace' was frequently used for bad luck, misfortune, loss." The only other reference in Shakespeare is in *Cymbeline*, II. iii. 3, "the most coldest [man] that ever turned up ace."

*Hip.* How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe 310  
comes back and finds her lover?

*The.* She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ;  
and her passion ends the play.

*Re-enter THISBE.*

*Hip.* Methinks she should not use a long one for such  
a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief. 315

*Dem.* A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus,  
which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God  
warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

*Lys.* She hath spied him already with those sweet  
eyes. 320

*Dem.* And thus she means, videlicet:—

*This.* Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

310. *Moonshine*] *the Moon-shine* F 3, 4. 310, 311. *before Thisbe . . .*  
*lover*] Rowe; *before? Thisby . . . Lower* Qq, Ff. 313. *Re-enter . . .*  
Dyce; *Enter Thisby* Ff (after 313); omitted Qq. 316. *mote*] Steevens, 1793  
(Heath conj.); *moth* Qq, Ff. 317, 318. *he for a man . . . God bless us*  
Qq, omitted Ff. 318. *warrant*] Collier, *warnd* Qq, *warn'd* Staunton, *ward*  
Staunton conj. 321. *means*] Qq, Ff; *moans* Theobald. 322–345.] *as in*  
Pope; sixteen lines in Qq, Ff.

310. *chance*] Cf. I. i. 129.

316. *mote*] See III. i. 165.

317, 318. *he for a man . . . God bless us*] This passage is omitted in the Ff, as Collier thinks, on account of the Statute 3 Jac. I. cap. 21, which of course had not passed when the Qq were printed. This statute imposed a penalty of ten pounds on any player who should "jestingly or profanely speak or use the holy name of God."

321. *means*] Jamieson, *Scot. Dict.*: "To Mene, Meane, To utter complaints, to make lamentations." Theobald read "moans," and the change appears to be

supported by 187, *antf*, and 332, *post*. But Ritson pointed out that "means" had anciently the same signification as "moans," and that it is a common term in Scottish law, signifying to "tell," "relate," "declare"; and that the petitions to the Lords of Session in Scotland run: "To the lords of council and session humbly means and shows your petitioner." Cf. *Two Gentlemen*, v. iv. 136, "To make such means for her as thou hast done." Craig refers to Marston, *The Fawn*, iv. i., "If you make good means and entreat hard, you may obtain a passage."

Speak, speak. Quite dumb? 325  
 Dead, dead? A tomb  
 Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
 These lily *mows*,  
 This cherry nose,  
 These yellow cowslip cheeks, 330  
 Are gone, are gone:  
 Lovers, make moan!  
 His eyes were green as leeks.  
 O Sisters Three,  
 Come, come, to me, 335  
 With hands as pale as milk;  
 Lay them in gore,  
 Since you have shore  
 With shears his thread of silk.

326. *tomb*] *tumba* Q 1. 327. *thy*] *my* F 3, 4. 328. *mows*] Editor; *brows*  
 Theobald; *lips* Qq, Ff. 337. *Lay*] *Lave* Theobald. 339. *his*] *this* F 3, 4.

325, 326, 331- *Speak, speak . . .*  
*Dead, dead . . . Are gone, are gone* "In  
 these passages Shakespeare probably  
 uses the underlay or Coocko-spel, thus  
 described by Puttenham: 'Ye have an-  
 other sort of repetition when in one verse,  
 or clause of a verse, ye iterate one word  
 without any intermission, as thus: . . .  
 bemoaning the departure of a dear  
 friend:

'The chiefest staffe of mine assured  
 stay,  
 With no small grief, *is gon, is gon*  
 away.'"

Rushton, *Shakespeare Illustrated*, Part  
 II. (1868), pp. 19, 20.

328, 329. *lily mows . . . cherry nose*]  
 "mows" used of course in burlesque  
 fashion for "lips," is, admittedly, some-  
 what daring emendation. But (1) I  
 think it reaches the burlesque level of the  
 passage; and (2) regular rhyme and metre  
 are clearly essential. Theobald says:

"All Thisby's lamentation till now runs  
 in regular rhyme and metre. I suspect,  
 therefore, the poet wrote These lilly  
*brows*. Now *black* brows being a beauty,  
*lilly* brows are as ridiculous as a *cherry*  
*nose*, *green* eyes, or *cowslip* cheeks." I  
 think Theobald's reasoning is sound,  
 and that we must adopt a rhyming word,  
 notwithstanding the protest of Furness,  
 that "of all tasks, that of converting the  
 intentional nonsense of this interlude  
 into sense seems to me the most need-  
 less." The explanation of the change  
 to "lips" may well be that, although  
 the printers of the Qq, Ff understood  
 the general sense of the passage, they  
 failed to grasp the burlesque usage of  
 "mows" (=mouths), and so substituted  
 for it the word which they understood.

333. *green*] Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*,  
 III. i. 221, "So green, so quick, so  
 fair an eye."

334. *O Sisters Three*] See 281, *ante*.



Tongue, not a word: 340

Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

[*Stabs herself.*

And farewell, friends;

Thus Thisby ends:

Adieu, adieu, adieu." [Dies. 345

*The.* Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

*Dem.* Ay, and Wall too.

*Bot.* [*Starting up.*] No, I assure you, the wall is down  
that parted their fathers. Will it please you to  
see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance 350  
between two of our company?

*The.* No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no  
excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are  
all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry,  
if he that writ it had played Pyramus, and hanged 355  
himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a  
fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very not-  
ably discharged. But come, your Bergomask: let  
your epilogue alone. [*A dance.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve: 360

342. [*Stabs herself*] Dyce; omitted Qq, Ff. 345. [*Dies*] Dyce. 348.  
Bot.] Ff, Lyon. Qq; [*Starting up*] Capell. 354. *need* be Capell conj.;  
Marry] Mary Q 1. 355. *hanged*] Qq, hung Ff. 358. *Bergomask*] Rowe;  
*Bergomaske* Qq, F 1, 2; *Bergomask* F 3, 4. 359. [*A dance*] A dance and  
exeunt clowns Capell; Here a dance of clowns Rowe; omitted Qq, Ff.

358. *Bergomask*] "A dance after the  
manner of the peasants of Bergomasco  
(sic), a country in Italy belonging to  
the Venetians. All the buffoons in  
Italy affect to imitate the ridiculous  
jargon of that people; and from thence  
it became a custom to mimic also their  
manner of dancing," Hanmer. Wright  
says: "If we substitute Bergamo for

Bergomasco, Hanmer's explanation is  
correct."

360. *iron tongue of midnight*] Craig  
compares *King John*, III. iii. 37:

"the midnight bell

Did, with his iron tongue and  
brazen mouth,  
Sound on into the drowsy race  
of night."

Lovers, to bed ; 'tis almost fairy time.  
 I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,  
 As much as we this night have overwatch'd.  
 This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled  
 The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed. 365  
 A fortnight hold we this solemnity,  
 In nightly revels, and new jollity. [Exeunt.

Enter PUCK.

*Puck.* Now the hungry lion roars,  
 And the wolf howls the moon ;  
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores, 370  
 All with weary task fordone.  
 Now the wasted brands do glow,  
 Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,  
 Puts the wretch, that lies in woe,  
 In remembrance of a shroud. 375

364. *palpable-gross*] hyphenated by Capell. 365. *gait*] *gaite* Rowe (ed. 2) ; *gate* Qq, Ff. 368. *Scene II.*] Capell ; *Scene III.* Pope ; Enter Puck] Enter Puck, with a broom on his shoulder Collier (ed. 2) ; *lion*] Rowe ; *Lyons* Qq, Ff. 369. *howls*] Theobald (Warburton) ; *beholds* Qq, Ff. 371. *fordone*] *foredooms* Q 1 ; *fore-done* Q 2, Ff. 373. *screech-owl*] *screech-owle* Q 1 ; *scritch-owls* Q 2, Ff ; *screeching*] *screeching* Q 1 ; *scritchng* Q 2, Ff ; *schrieking* Johnson.

365. *gait*] Cf. II. i. 130, *ante*, "with swimming gait" ; 413, *post* ; and *Richard II.* III. ii. 15, "And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way."

368. *Now, etc.*] Coleridge's well-known criticism of this lyric passage is abundantly justified : "Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity ! So far it is Greek ; but then add, O ! what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation of English fancy ! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these thirty lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond."

369. *howls*] Warburton's certain correction, for the "beholds" of the Qq, Ff, is founded on "the wolf's characteristic property." Theobald compares Marston's *Antonio and Melinda* (Part ii.), III. iii., "Now barks the wolfe against the full cheekt moon," etc., where the whole passage seems copied from Shakespeare. Malone compares Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, I. v. 37, "And hungry wolves continually did howle."

371. *fordone*] overcome. Cf. *Hamlet*, II. i. 103, "Love ; Whose violent property fordoes itself."

Now it is the time of night,  
 That the graves, all gaping wide,  
 Every one lets forth his sprite,  
 In the church-way paths to glide:  
 And we fairies, that do run 380  
 By the triple Hecate's team,  
 From the presence of the sun,  
 Following darkness like a dream,  
 Now are frolic: not a mouse  
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house: 385  
 I am sent with broom before,  
 To sweep the dust behind the door.

*Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with their train.*

*Obe.* Though the house give glimmering light,  
 By the dead and drowsy fire,

385. *hallow'd*] Theobald; *hallowed*] Qq, Ff. 387. Enter . . .] Enter King and Queene of Fairies, with all their traine Q 1; Enter . . . with their traine Q 2, Ff. 388. *Though*] Grant White; *Through* Qq, Ff; *the house give*] *this house in* Johnson conj., *this hall go* Lettsom conj., *the house gives* Kinnear conj. 389. *By*] *Now* Kinnear conj.

376. *Now it is, etc.*] Cf. *Hamlet*, III. ii. 406, "'Tis now the very witching time of night."

381. *triple Hecate's team*] "The chariot of the moon was drawn by two horses, the one black, the other white. Hecate is uniformly a disyllable in Shakespeare, except in 1 *Henry VI.* III. ii. 64. In Spenser and Ben Jonson it is rightly a trisyllable. But Marlowe, though a scholar, and Middleton use it as a disyllable, and Golding has it both ways." Douce.

386. *broom*] "Robin Goodfellow, and the fairies generally, were remarkable for their cleanliness. Reginald Scot says thus of Puck: 'Your grandames, maid, were wont to set a boll of milk for him, for (his pains in) grinding of malt or mustard, and

sweeping the house at midnight.' Compare also Ben Jonson's masque of *Love Restored*: 'Robin Goodfellow, he that sweeps the hearth and the house clean, riddles for the country-maids, and does all their other drudgery.'" Halliwell.

387. *behind the door*] Of course this means to sweep away the dust which lies behind the door; not, as Farmer thought, to sweep it behind, "a common practice in large houses, where the doors of halls and galleries are thrown backward, and seldom or never shut."

388. *Though*] I think this, the reading of Grant White, must be accepted. He says: "Plainly, Oberon does not intend to command his sprites to give glimmering light through the house by the dead and drowsy fire, but to direct every elf and fairy sprite to

Every elf and fairy sprite, 390

Hop as light as bird from brier ;

And this ditty, after me,

Sing, and dance it trippingly.

*Tia.* First, rehearse your song by rote ;

To each word a warbling note : 395

Hand in hand, with fairy grace,

Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*

*Obe.* Now, until the break of day,

Through this house each fairy stray.

To the best bride-bed will we, 400

Which by us shall blessed be ;

394. *your* Q 1 ; *this* Q 2, Ff. 397. [Song and Dance] Capell. 398-420.] assigned to *Oberon* in Q ; called *The Song* in Ff and printed in italics ; restored to *Oberon* by Johnson.

hop as light as bird from brier, *though* the house give glimmering light by the dead and drowsy fire." The merit of White's reading is that it restores sense and meaning to the passage with the smallest possible change ; and he has also rightly restored the punctuation of the Qq, Ff after "fire," which Capell needlessly altered. "R. G. White's emendation, obtained by an insignificant change, is to me satisfactory," says Furness. It is highly probable that the explanation of the corruption is owing to the similarity of the three words, (1) "though," (2) "through," and (3) "thorough," the interpolation of an "r" changing a conjunction into a preposition, and thus altering the sense of the passage ; and perhaps also to the fact that the phrase occurs in 399, *infra*.

391. *as bird from brier*] Steevens quotes from Minot (ed. Ritson, p. 31), "That are was blith als brid on brere." The expression was common in the old poets. Cf. Spenser, *Amoretti*, Sonnet 26.

397. Song] "The Song" F 1. "The songs I suppose were lost," says Johnson, "because they were not inserted in the players' parts, from which the drama was printed."

401. *blessed be*] Steevens quotes Chaucer's *Marchantes Tale* (575, ed. Morris), "And whan the bed was with the prest i-blessid," and also refers to the "Articles ordained by King Henry VII. for the Regulation of his Household," that this ceremony was observed at the marriage of a Princess: "All men at her comming to be voided, except woemen, till she be brought to her bedd ; and the man both ; he sittinge in his bedd in his shirte, with a gowne cast aboute him. Then the Bishoppe, with the Chaplaines, to come in, and *blesse the bedd* : then everie man to avoide without any drinke save the twee estates, if they liste, priviely." Douce says, "Blessing the bed was observed at *all* marriages," and he gives the form from the Sarum Missal. See his *Illustrations* (1807), p. 124.

And the issue there create  
 Ever shall be fortunate.  
 So shall all the couples three  
 Ever true in loving be ; 405  
 And the blots of nature's hand  
 Shall not in their issue stand ;  
 Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,  
 Nor mark prodigious, such as are  
 Despised in nativity, 410  
 Shall upon their children be.  
 With this field-dew consecrate,  
 Every fairy take his gait ;  
 And each several chamber bless,  
 Through this palace with sweet peace ; 415  
 And the owner of it blest,  
 Ever shall in safety rest.  
 Trip away ;  
 Make no stay ;  
 Meet me all by break of day. 420  
 [Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.

413. *gait*] Johnson ; *gate* Qq, Ff. 416, 417.] the transposition of Staunton (Singer conj.) ; *Ever shall . . . blest* Qq, Ff ; *Ever shall it safely* Rowe (ed. 2) ; *E'er shall it in safety* Malone ; *Ever shall't in safety* Dyce (ed. 2). 418. *away ;] away, then* Hanmer. 420. [Exeunt . . .] Capell, Exeunt Qq, omitted Ff.

402. *create*] Cf. "consecrate," 412, *post*, and *Sonnets*, lxxiv. 6, "The very part was consecrate to thee." In these forms of the participle "ed" is omitted after "t" or "d."

409. *prodigious*] portentous. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I. v. 143, "prodigious birth of love" ; and *King John*, III. i. 45 :

"Full of unpleasing blots and sight-  
 less stains,  
 Lame, foolish, crooked, swart,  
 prodigious,

Patch'd with foul moles and eye-  
 offending marks."

416, 417.] Keightley, *Expositor*, p. 137, says: "This is the third or rather fourth transposition in this play. We may observe that twice before it was the second line of the couplet that commenced with 'Ever' ; i.e. 'Ever shall be fortunate,' 'Ever true in loving be' ; the inference of course being that it is the *second* line in this case also which should so commence."

*Puck.* If we shadows have offended,  
 Think but this, and all is mended,  
 That you have but slumber'd here,  
 While these visions did appear.  
 And this weak and idle theme, 425  
 No more yielding but a dream,  
 Gentles, do not reprehend;  
 If you pardon, we will mend.  
 And, as I am an honest Puck,  
 If we have unearned luck 430  
 Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,  
 We will make amends ere long;  
 Else the Puck a liar call.  
 So, good night unto you all.  
 Give me your hands, if we be friends, 435  
 And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*]

424. *these*] *this* Q 2. 429. *I am*] *I'm* Capell; *an*] omitted F 3, 4. 436.  
 [*Exit*] Capell; omitted Qq, Ff; *Exeunt omnes* Rowe.

421. *shadows*] Cf. 211 of this scene, "The best in this kind are but shadows," and the well-known passage in *Macbeth*, v. v. 24, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player." "What the poet had put into the mouth of one of the characters [Theseus] in respect of the poor attempts of the Athenian clowns, he now, by the repetition of the word shadows in effect says for himself and his companions." Hunter, *New Illustrations* (1845), i. 298.

429. *honest Puck*] Furness says "honest" here refers merely to his veracity, as is shown by line 433. The name occurs in Spenser's *Epithalamion*, "Ne let the *posuke*, nor other evill sprites," etc.

431. *serpent's tongue*] "If we be dismissed without hisses." Johnson. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. i. 144, "An excellent device! so, if any of the audience hiss, you may cry, Well done, Hercules! now thou crushest the snake." Steevens quotes Markham's *English Arcadia* (1607), "But the nymph, after the custom of distrest tragedians, whose first act is entertained with a snaky salutation," etc.

435. *Give me your hands*] *Plaudite*. "Give us your applause. Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed." Johnson.

## APPENDIX I

MR. P. A. DANIEL ON THE DURATION OF THE ACTION  
(*Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1877-79,  
Pt. II. p. 147).

DAY I.—Act I. sc. i. Athens. In the first two speeches the proposed duration of the action seems pretty clearly set forth. By [them] I understand that four clear days are to intervene between the time of this scene and the day of the wedding. The night of this day No. I would, however, suppose five *nights* to come between.

DAY 2.—Act II., Act III., and part of sc. i. Act IV., are on the morrow night in the wood, and are occupied with the adventures of the lovers; with Oberon, Titania, and Puck; the Clowns. Daybreak being at hand, the fairies trip after the night's shade and leave the lovers and Bottom asleep.

DAY 3.—Act IV. sc. i. continued. Morning. May-day. Theseus, Hippolyta, etc., enter and awake the lovers with their hunting-horns.

In Act I. it will be remembered that four days were to elapse before Theseus's nuptials and Hermia's resolve; but here we see the plot is altered, for we are now only in the second day from the opening scene, and only one clear day has intervened between day No. I and this, the wedding-day.

Act IV. sc. ii.—Athens. Later in the day.

Act V.—In the Palace. Evening.

According to the opening speeches of Theseus and Hippolyta in Act I., we should have expected the dramatic action to have comprised five days, exclusive of that Act ; as it is, we have only three days inclusive of it.

Day I.—Act I.

„ 2.—Acts II., III., and part of sc. i. Act IV.

„ 3.—Part of sc. i. Act IV., sc. ii. Act IV., and Act v.



## APPENDIX II

MR. P. A. DANIEL'S NOTE ON II. i. 9—*the fairy "orbs"*  
*or circles.*

HALLIWELL describes these "circles" as being from four to eight feet *broad*, and from six to twelve feet in *diameter*. What is the distinction between the breadth and the diameter of a circle? A circle is a plane circumscribed by a line, every part of which line is equidistant from the centre of the plane.

But the circumscribing line may also be described as a *circle*; is it this line, ring, or belt which Halliwell describes as being "from four to eight feet broad"? [Probably so.—ED.]

Whatever its breadth, this line, ring, or belt must be included in the diameter or breadth of the circle; but the highest figure which Halliwell gives for the diameter of the circle is twelve feet, and a ring eight feet broad would alone give sixteen feet, without taking into account the vacant inner space of the circle. Surely Halliwell could not intend to confine his *diameter* to this internal space. [Probably so.—ED.] And then again, are fairy rings ever "from four to eight *feet* broad"?

Has Halliwell been misread, and should we for *feet* read *inches*? [Probably not.—ED.]

I should like to read—"These rings are usually from four to eight *inches* broad, and *the entire circle* from six to twelve feet in diameter."

## APPENDIX III

### PASSAGES FROM CHAUCER'S "KNIGHTES TALE."

(Ed. Morris.)

"WHILOM, as olde stories tellen us,  
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus ;  
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,  
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
That gretter was ther non under the sonne. 5  
Ful many a riche contré hadde he wonne ;  
That with his wisdom and his chivalrie  
He conquered all the regne of Femynye,  
That whilom was i-cleped Cithea ;  
And weddede the queen Ipolita, 10  
And brought hire hoom with him in his contré,  
With moche glorie and gret solempnité,  
And eek hire yonge suster Emelye.  
And thus with victorie and with melodye  
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde, 15  
And al his ost, in armes him biside.  
And certes, if it nere to long to heere,  
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,  
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye  
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye ; 20  
And of the grete bataille for the nones  
Bytwix Athenes and the Amazones ;  
And how asgid was Ypolita,  
The faire hardy quyen of Cithea ;  
And of the feste that was at hire weddyng, 25  
And of the tempest at hire hoom comyng ;  
But al that thing I most as now forbere.  
I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere,"

## APPENDIX III

“ —ne how the Grekes pleye  
The wake-pleyes, kepe I nat to seye ;  
Who wrastleth best naked, with oyle enoynt,  
Ne who that bar him best in no disjoynt.  
I wol not telle eek how that they ben goon  
Hoom til Athenes whan the pley is doon.”

2095

## APPENDIX IV

### THE STORY OF PYRAMUS AND THISBE IN GOLDING'S TRANSLATION OF "OVID."

WITHIN the towne (of whose huge walles so monstrous high  
and thicke

The same is giuen *Semyramis* for making them of bricke)  
Dwelt hard together two yong folke in houses ioyned so nere  
That vnder all one roofe well nie both twaine conueyed were.  
The name of him was *Pyramus*, and *Thisbe* calde was she, 5  
So faire a man in all the East was none alieue as he,  
Nor nere a woman maiden or wife in beautie like to hir.  
This neighbord bred acquaintance first, this neyghbrod first  
did stirre

The secret sparkes, this neighbrod first an entrance in did  
showe

For loue to come to that to which it afterward did  
growe. 10

And if that right had taken place they had beneman and wife,  
But still their Parents went about to let which (for their life)  
They could not let. For both their heartes with equall flame  
did burne.

No man was priue to their thoughts. And for to serue their  
tyme

In steade of talke they vsed signes, the closelier they  
suprest 15

The fire of loue, the fiercer still it raged in their brest.

The wall that parted house from house had riuen therein a  
crany

Which shooke at making of the wall, this fault not markt  
of any

Of many hundred yeares before (what doth not loue espie.)  
 These louers first of all found out, and made a way  
 whereby 20  
 To talke together secretly, and through the same did goe  
 Their louing whisprings verie light and safely to and fro.  
 Now as a toneside *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* on the tother  
 Stoode often drawing one of them the pleasant breath from  
 other  
 O thou enuious wall (they sayd) why letst thou louers  
 thus? 25  
 What matter were it if that thou permitted both of vs  
 In armes eche other to embrace? Or if thou thinke that this  
 Were ouermuch, yet mightest thou at least make rounge to  
 kisse.  
 And yet thou shalt not find vs churles: we think our selues  
 in det  
 For this same piece of courtesie, in vouching safe to let 30  
 Our sayings to our friendly eares thus freely come and goe,  
 Thus hauing where they stood in vaine complayned of their  
 woe,  
 When night drew nere, they bade adew and eche gaue kisses  
 sweete  
 Vnto the parget on their side, the which did neuer meete.  
 Next morning with hir cherefull light had driuen the starres  
 aside 35  
 And *Phobus* with his burning beames the dewie grasse had  
 dride.  
 These louers at their wonted place by foreappointment  
 met.  
 Where after much complaint and mone they couenanted to  
 get  
 Away from such as watched them, and in the Euening late  
 To steale out of their fathers house and eke the Citie gate. 40  
 And to thentent that in the fieldes they strayde not vp and  
 downe  
 They did agree at *Ninus* Tumb to meete without the  
 towne,  
 And tarie vnderneath a tree that by the same did grow  
 Which was a faire high Mulberie with fruite as white as  
 snow,

Hard by a cool and trickling spring. This bargaine pleasde  
 them both 45  
 And so daylight (which to their thought away but slowly  
 goth)  
 Did in the Ocean fall to rest, and night from thence doth  
 rise.  
 Assoone as darkenesse once was come, straight *Thisbe* did  
 deuise  
 A shift to wind hir out of doores, that none that were within  
 Perceyued hir: And muffling hir with clothes about hir  
 chin, 50  
 That no man might discerne hir face, to *Ninus* Tumb she  
 came  
 Vnto the tree, and sat her downe there vnderneath the same.  
 Loue made hir bold. But see the chance, there comes  
 besmerde with blood,  
 About the chappes a Lionesse all foming from the wood  
 From slaughter lately made of Kine to staunch hir bloudie  
 thirst 55  
 With water of the foresaid spring. Whome *Thisbe* spying  
 furst  
 A farre by moonelight, therevpon with fearfull steppes gan  
 fie,  
 And in a darke and yrksome caue did hide hirselse thereby.  
 And as she fled away for hast she let hir mantle fall  
 The whych for feare she left behind not looking backe at  
 all. 60  
 Now when the cruell Lionesse hir thirst had stanchd  
 well,  
 In going to the Wood she found the slender weed that fell  
 From *Thisbe*, which with bloudie teeth in pieces she did  
 teare  
 The night was somewhat further spent ere *Pyramus* came  
 there  
 Who seeing in the suttle sande the print of Lions paw, 65  
 Waxt pale for feare. But when also the bloudie cloke he  
 saw  
 All rent and torne, one night (he sayd) shall louers two con-  
 founde,  
 Of which long life deserued she of all that liue on ground.

My soule deserues of this mischaunce the perill for to  
beare.

I wretch haue bene the death of thee, which to this place of  
feare 70

Did cause thee in the night to come, and came not here  
before.

My wicked limmes and wretched guttes with cruell teeth  
therefore

Deuour ye O ye Lions all that in this rocke doe dwell.

But Cowardes vse to wish for death. The slender weede  
that fell

From *Thisbe* vp he takes, and streight doth beare it to the  
tree, 75

Which was appointed erst the place of meeting for to  
bee.

And when he had bewept and kist the garment which he  
knew,

Receyue thou my bloud too (quoth he) and therewithall he  
drew

His sworde, the which among his guttes he thrust, and  
by and by

Did draw it from the bleeding wound beginning for to  
die, 80

And cast himselfe vpon his backe, the blood did spin  
on hie

As when a Conduite pipe is crackt, the water bursting  
out

Doth shote itselfe a great way off and pierce the Ayre  
about.

The leaues that were vpon the tree besprinkled with his  
blood

Were died blacke. The roote also bestained as it stooode, 85  
A deepe darke purple colour straight vpon the Berries

cast.

Anon scarce ridded of hir feare with which she was agast,  
For doubt of disapointing him commes *Thisbe* forth in  
hast,

And for hir louer looks about, reioycing for to tell

How hardly she had scapt that night the daunger that  
befell. 90

And as she knew right well the place and facion of the tree  
(As whych she saw so late before): euen so when she did  
see

The colour of the Berries turnde, she was vncertain whither  
It were the tree at which they both agreed to meete together.  
While in this doubtful stounde she stoode, she cast hir eye  
aside 95

And there beweltred in his bloud hir louer she espide  
Lie sprawling with his dying limmes: at which she started  
backe,

And looked pale as any Box, a shuddring through hir  
stracke,

Euen like the Sea which sodenly with whissing noyse  
doth moue,

When with a little blast of winde it is but toucht  
aboue. } 100

But when approching nearer him she knew it was hir  
loue.

She beate hir brest, she shrieked out, she tare hir golden  
heares

And taking him betweene hir armes did wash his wounds  
with teares,

She meynt hir weeping with his bloud, and kissing all his  
face

(Which now became as colde as yse) she cride in wofull  
case 105

Alas what chaunce my *Pyramus* hath parted thee and  
mee? }

Make aunswere O my *Pyramus*: It is thy *Thisb*, euen  
shee }

Whome thou doste loue most heartely that speaketh vnto  
thee. }

Grise eare and rayse thy heauie heade. He hearing *Thisbes*  
name,

Lift vp his dying eyes and hauing seene hir closde the  
same. 110

But when she knew hir mantle there and saw his scabberd  
lie

Without the swoorde: Vnhappy man thy loue hath made  
thee die:



Thy loue (she said) hath made thee slea thy selfe. This  
 hand of mine  
 Is strong inough to doe the like. My loue no lesse than  
 thine  
 Shall giue me force to worke my wound. I will pursue the  
 dead. 115

And wretched woman as I am, it shall of me be sed  
 That like as of thy death I was the only cause and blame,  
 So am I thy companion eke and partner in the same,  
 For death which only coulde alas a sunder part vs twaine,  
 Shall neuer so disseuer vs but we will meete againe. 120  
 And you the Parentes of vs both, most wretched folke  
 alyue,

Let this request that I shall make in both our names  
 byliue

Entreate you to permit that we whome chaste and stedfast  
 loue

And whome euen death hath ioynde in one, may as it doth  
 behoue

In one graue be together layd. And thou vnhappy tree 125  
 Which shroudest now the corse of one, and shalt anon  
 through mee

Shroude two, of this same slaughter holde the sicker  
 signes for ay  
 Blacke be the colour of thy fruite and mourning like alway,  
 Such as the murder of vs twaine may euermore bewray. }

This said, she tooke the sword yet warme with slaughter of  
 hir loue 130

And setting it beneath hir brest, did to hir heart it shoue.  
 Her prayer with the Gods and with their Parentes tooke  
 effect.

For when the fruite is throughly ripe, the Berrie is bespect  
 With colour tending to a blacke. And that which after  
 fire

Remained, rested in one Tumbe as *Thisbe* did desire. 135

## A NEW SONET OF PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

*To the, Downe right Squier.*

1. Ou Dames (I say) that climbe the mount  
    of *Helicon*,  
Come on with me, and giue account,  
    what hath been don :  
Come tell the chaunce ye Muses all,  
    and dolefull newes,  
Which on these Louers did befall,  
    which I accuse.  
In *Babilon* not long agoe,  
    a noble Prince did dwell :  
Whose daughter bright dimd ech ones sight,  
    so farre she did excel.
2. An other Lord of high renowne,  
    who had a sonne :  
And dwelling there within the towne  
    great loue begunne :  
*Pyramus* this noble Knight,  
    I tel you true :  
Who with the loue of *Thisbe* bright,  
    did cares renue :  
It came to passe, their secrets was,  
    beknowne vnto them both :  
And then in minde, their place do finde,  
    where they their loue vnclothe.
3. This loue they vse long tract of time,  
    till it befell :  
At last they promised to meet at prime  
    by *Minus* well :  
Where they might louingly imbrace,  
    in loues delight :  
That he might see his *Thisbies* face  
    and she his sight :

In ioyfull case, she approcht the place,  
 where she her *Pyramus*  
 Had thought to viewd, but was renewd  
 to them most dolorous.

4. Thus while she staies for *Pyramus*,  
 there did proceed :  
 Out of the wood a Lion fierce,  
 made *Thisbie* dreed :  
 And as in haste she fled awaie,  
 her Mantle fine :  
 The Lion tare in stead of praie,  
 till that the time  
 That *Pyramus* proceeded thus,  
 and see how lion tare  
 The Mantle this of *Thisbie* his,  
 he desperately doth fare.
  
5. For why he thought the lion had  
 faire *Thisbie* slaine.  
 And then the beast with his bright blade,  
 he slew certaine :  
 Then made he mone and said alas,  
 (O wretched wight)  
 Now art thou in a woful case,  
 For *Thisbie* bright :  
 O Gods aboue, my faithfull loue  
 shal neuer faile this need :  
 For this my breath by fatall death,  
 shal weaue *Atropos* threed.
  
6. Then from his sheath he drew his blade,  
 and to his hart  
 He thrust the point, and life did vade,  
 with painfull smart :  
 Then *Thisbie* she from cabin came  
 with pleasure great,  
 And to the well apase she ran,  
 there for to treat :

And to discusse, with *Pyramus*  
of al her former feares.  
And when slaine she, found him truly,  
she shed foorth bitter teares.

7. When sorrow great that she had made,  
she took in hand  
The bloudie knife, to end her life,  
by fatall hand.  
You Ladies all, peruse and see,  
the faithfulnessse,  
How these two Louers did agree,  
to die in distresse :  
You Muses waile, and do not faile,  
but still do you lament :  
These louers twaine, who with such paine,  
did die so well content.

I. THOMSON.

*Finis.*

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